

REPORTS

EAST MIDLANDS IN BLOOM 2014

From the Chairman:

“2014 has been another record-breaking year for East Midlands in Bloom, with 61 main ‘In-Bloom’ entries (eight being completely new to Blooming and four others returning after a break) and 143 It’s Your Neighbourhood groups coming forward for assessment (another significant increase). We had record participation in the Special Awards for School Gardens, Pubs and Hotels, Retail and Commercial participants and Domestic Front Gardens. Here School gardens must get a particular mention, with 30 schools taking part – a fantastic achievement.

Children’s art and Photography entries remain popular, and we were very pleased with the quality of work put forward; I encourage you to engage with schools and young persons’ groups in your communities to participate in this most enjoyable activity.

2014 was the Golden Jubilee year for Britain in Bloom, and our special activity was to ask as many of you as possible to create a pennant to celebrate this – the display, which we put around the venue for the Awards Ceremony at Lark Hill Village, was absolutely wonderful, so well done to all of you who took part!

The Autumn Newsletter will have details of everything that is proposed for 2015 in terms of special or commemorative activities, as well as details of the Biennial Seminar in Melton Mowbray on 19th February, where we hope to see as many of you as possible present.

My aim for 2015 is to reach another record main Bloom entry of at least 65 communities, and increase IYN participation to at least 150 groups. To achieve this we will all have to promote the Bloom anywhere and everywhere that we can over the next few months. We ‘Bloomers’ know that it is the best community campaign that there is, bringing people together to improve their local areas; our challenge is to spread the word about the campaign to anyone and everyone that we can!

I look forward to seeing you all again next year, and hope that we have lovely weather for the judging period of 6th-17th July for Bloom (July and August for IYN) and another great celebration of your achievements at the Awards Ceremony at the Rutland Golf Club on September 16th.

Happy Blooming!

Jeff Bates, Chairman East Midlands in Bloom

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SMALL VILLAGE

 **Barton in Fabis:** **Gold Award and Category Winner 174 points**

Judged on 14th July

Judges Martin Hardy and Richard Adams

Judges Award: For the way in which the commemoration of the outbreak of World War One was reflected in many different aspects of the village's entry.

A lovely village to be shown around on a summer's day. The portfolio was very impressive and the enthusiasm of all the Bloom Committee was very rewarding. The theme of men killed in WW1 being marked by various items in the village is an appropriate idea in this centenary year.

Areas of Achievement

SECTION A

Resident's front gardens were very impressive, colour schemes good as is the new tree/hedge planting area

SECTION B

Maintenance and upkeep of street furniture and cleaning of church gates is very good. The use of the bus shelter as a notice board for village art posters is a good idea.

SECTION C

The WW1 theme is brilliant. Finding out the histories of the 7 men killed and using the idea of tree planting etc. on the number 7 theme is a very good way of respecting the fallen of the village in the 100th year since the start of the war.

Areas suggested for future development

SECTION A

Just keep doing more of the same, adding more colour all the time using sustainable planting.

SECTION B

The idea of possibly wood carved sculptures in the village using recycled wood should be looked into and encouraged.

SECTION C

Continue to try to gain more village sponsorship or funding

A – 88 B –41 C – 45 Total 174

SMALL VILLAGE

Little Cawthorpe in Bloom

Judged on 17th July

Silver Award 141 points

Judges: Martin Hardy and Richard Adams

It was a pleasure to visit this attractive village on the edge of the Wolds and see the improvements made, especially in the environment and community areas since their first time entry in 2013. Little Cawthorpe in Bloom are now well within striking distance of a silver gilt award.

Areas of Achievement

Section A

The Royal Oak with its floral displays and well maintained grounds provides an attractive feature for visitors to the village

The extensive planting of spring bulbs in verges and open spaces throughout Little Cawthorpe helps to provide year round interest.

Several residents have helped to improve the appearance of the village with sustainable planting in front gardens adjacent to the highway.

Section B

There is a very high standard of cleanliness in public areas throughout the village

The idea to adopt the grey wagtail as the village symbol and to take measures to protect and encourage it is original, innovative and commendable.

Section C

The judges were impressed by the efforts being made to involve pupils from primary and secondary schools from the surrounding area.

The competition for the design of bird boxes by local students and the subsequent placing of 60 boxes throughout the village is highly commendable.

The preparation of a portfolio with its objective to improve the environment of the village over the next five years shows the local commitment to the Bloom

Areas for Development

Section A

Try to include a little more colour in those planted areas which are visible from the highway.

There may still be an opportunity for additional planting at the approach to the village

Section B

Is there an opportunity to place a larger information board perhaps in the vicinity of the ford giving more information on the village history/heritage including such items as the colonial cottage?

Although much of the street furniture is well maintained there are some areas for possible improvement such as the County Council road signs.

Section C

Would it be possible to work with the Royal Oak to extend their brochure to include more information on the history and environment of the village and the work being done by Little Cawthorpe in Bloom?

The judges were impressed by the involvement with young people and look forward to seeing the results of the ongoing discussions between the owner of the Orchid Meadow and local teachers.

The formation of a village In Bloom group would help to further the involvement of the local community in the competition.

A: 71 B: 36 C: 34 Total: 141

SMALL VILLAGE**Elmton****Silver Award 135 points**

Judged on 15th July

Judges Martin Hardy and Richard Adams

We had a very informative tour around the village and greatly enjoyed viewing the previous week's well-dressing. The opening of gardens for the NGS was encouraging.

Areas of Achievement

Section A

Front gardens were impressive throughout the village, as were the baskets and tubs. All plantings provided a colourful and well maintained display.

Section B

Wild flower area excellent, now mowing issues are resolved. The idea of restoring the widow's cottage is great and would make a good village focal point and be a great asset.

Section C

Community web site is brilliant, and 60/70% of village involvement in the community association is outstanding and must be very rewarding for everybody in the village.

Areas suggested for future development

Section A

We think there are more opportunities for colourful sustainable planting areas throughout the village. Maybe this could be looked into for future years

Section B

Still more attention needed to street furniture and fittings. A little extra work on these would help improve the look of the village.

Section C

Funding for the bloom aspect of the community work should be made clearer in the portfolio. Maybe press coverage of events could be pushed more.

A: 64 B: 35 C: 36 Total: 135

SMALL VILLAGE**Richmond Village****Silver Award 134 points**Judged on 16th July

Judge: Richard Adams

Following its first entry in the competition in 2013 Richmond has maintained a high standard of horticultural achievement thanks largely to the energy commitment and skill of the gardener Nick Ives

Areas of Achievement

Section A

The colourful floral displays throughout the site are of a consistently high standard

The introduction of innovative features such as the turf sofas and the potting tables for residents showed imagination and helped to increase the pleasure of the gardens for the residents.

The redesign of the main highway frontage to the site to improve the appearance and also improve the outlook for ground floor residents was commendable.

Section B

The introduction of extra bird boxes and feeding stations over the past year will continue to attract wild life to the site and give pleasure to the residents.

The standard of environmental management throughout the site is commendably high.

Section C

The involvement of the local Rotary Club in the proposed butterfly garden is a good example of how links can be forged with the local community.

It was good to hear that visits to the site by local children are being encouraged.

Areas for Development

Section A

The lack of any business area in the submission has to be reflected in the points awarded in this section. Is there no possibility of including the ground of the public house next to the site into next year's entry?

Section B

Continue to search for some way to reflect the heritage or identity of the locality in the entry.

The proposed butterfly area should provide an interesting addition to the village over the next year.

Section C

Consider setting up a small In Bloom group with representatives from residents, management and gardening staff.

The preparation of a brief portfolio illustrating the appearance of the site throughout the year and the plans for the future would enhance any future entry.

A: 73 B: 34 C: 27 Total: 134

SMALL VILLAGE**St Crispin Village****Silver Award 128 points**Judged on 14th July

Judges: Martin Hardy and Richard Adams

We were shown around St. Crispin Village by members of the Gardening Club, which included Beryl, Dez, Gill and Linda. The whole grounds were shown including the greenhouse where many of their young plants are started and grown on.

Areas of Achievement

Section A

The displays were very colourful and the change of emphasis towards perennial planting was a good idea given the size of the site and the time available

Section B

Impressive use of water collection butts all over the site. Although a small compost area in size, the composting system works well. Compost made in the garden is added to the beds as needed

Section C

Getting help from learning difficulty volunteers is good. The support from Barclaycard, both financial and with labour, has been a great way to help develop the new rose garden.

Areas for Development

Section A

Many of the existing original plantings (8 years old) now need replacing, especially the Lavender beds. Grass areas could be improved by feeding and a greater control of the lawn weeds. This would improve the whole view of the village.

Section B

The butterfly garden is becoming tired and could be replanted with new wild life attracting plants. A interpretation board explaining the history of the St Crispin's area, may be by the front door, would be of great interest to new visitors

Section C

More support from local Garden Centres and sponsorship of pots and tubs should be sought. Also, a guide/portfolio of the work done by the Garden Committee would be nice.

A: 62 B: 35 C: 31 Total: 128

SMALL VILLAGE

Wessington in Bloom

Bronze Award 118 points

Judged on 7th July

Judge: Richard Adams

Judges Award: For the cooperation between the pupils and parents of Wessington Primary School and the work of the Wessington Nature Reserve Group

It was a pleasure to visit Wessington making its first appearance in East Midlands in Bloom. It is obvious that this village with its strong community spirit and strong links with the primary school has the potential to go much further in the competition

Areas of Achievement

Section A

An attractive display of planted containers on verges and public open space provided and maintained by local residents and organisations.

The extensive areas of open space which form part of the character of the village were maintained to a high standard.

The grounds of the primary school were not only maintained to a high standard but were also used as an excellent environmental teaching resource

Section B

The ongoing work on the nature reserve is a credit to all those involved.

The uncapping of the wells in the village and the extensive floral displays by residents of all ages in the well dressing is a good example of the way in which the In Bloom entry can focus on the local heritage.

Pride of place was reflected in a number of ways such as the repainting of memorial plaques on open spaces in the village and the carved timber seat in the nature reserve.

Section C

There were a number of good examples of the way in which Section 106 funding has been used to bring significant environmental benefits to Wessington.

The involvement of the Primary School staff, pupils and parents in community and environmental initiatives in the village was most impressive.

Areas for Development

Section A

Try to provide more evidence of attractive front gardens in the village. How about a front garden competition?

The involvement of commercial properties in East Midlands in Bloom is an important part of the competition and should be explored for your next entry.

The large areas of open space are part of the character of the village but do they also provide an opportunity for a limited amount of tree and shrub planting?

Section B

Try to concentrate on keeping the roads and paths on the judging route free of litter and weeds.

As the work in the nature reserve proceeds limited signage and information boards would further increase the attraction of the area for the benefit of visitors

Section C

Try to use a judging route which demonstrates how the entry addresses all the core elements detailed in the advice notes given to entrants.

The preparation of a portfolio and a simple action plan in any future entry would not only help the judges to see what year round activity takes place in the village but would also give the village a structure around which to build on what is a very sound start to Wessington's participation in East Midlands in Bloom

A: 60 B: 30 C: 28 Total: 118

SMALL VILLAGE**Ranby****Certificate of Achievement 95 points**

Judged on 15th July

Judges: Martin Hardy and Richard Adams

Our tour started at The Chequers Pub. There have been some improvements since last year, and a small extra effort could result in a lift to a bronze award.

Areas of Achievement

Section A

Planters on the canal bridge were colourful and well maintained. Baskets on the lamp posts looked good. Grass cutting throughout the village was in good order

Section B

Many good future ideas. The idea of a wild flower meadow being developed on the horse paddock area needs to be followed through. Hopefully we may see more of this next year.

Section C

The news of the increased numbers on the Bloom Committee, now up to 5, is encouraging. Hopefully they can help with all aspects of work including the practical side of things.

Areas for Development

Section A

Hopefully the new owner of the pub will help to develop more colourful displays in the village, and possibly get more involved with the general running of The Bloom

Section B

Possibly more could be made of the canal history with an interpretation sign board explaining things.

Section C

More funding and support from local businesses should be encouraged. Maybe the local school children could be involved, or possibly support in some form from HMP Ranby

A: 42 B: 26 C: 27 Total: 95

VILLAGE

Lark Hill Village

Silver Gilt Award and Category Winner 160 points

Judged on 11th July

Judges: Doug Stacey and Robin Allan

Judges Award: For the provision of a Garden of Memories for those affected by Dementia

This retirement village opened autumn 2009. In 2010 it achieved outstanding in Its Your Neighbourhood, then it has gradually increased its score within the Silver Grade of the main EMIB village category over the past 3 years. This year it was pleasing to see further significant improvements made in response to the judges' comments of earlier years. This has resulted in the award of a very well merited Silver Gilt medal. Very well done to all those many people who have made a contribution to this success.

Areas of Achievement

Section A

The improved floral impact made by the entrance borders to the village.

The increased level of community involvement displayed for example in the many balcony plantings, the gallerias, private gardens and adopted communal beds and borders.

The interest provided by the wide range and variety of plants throughout the village

Section B

Retaining Green Flag status for the site, and the increasingly sustainable style of management including extensive use of mulches.

Changes in grassland management to create wildflower meadow areas and improved wildlife habitats.

The completely litter free site, improved maintenance of block paving areas and excellent arrangements for recycling including many new rainwater butts.

Section C

The impressive involvement of so many volunteers in for example, the restoration of the bird hide, the management of the pond and aquarium, glasshouse work, communal garden maintenance and the manufacture of so many timber products for use around the site.

Obtaining a live interview about the entry with Radio Nottingham

Areas for Development

Section A

Since opening 5 years ago there is evidence of a need for review and renewal of some small sections of shrubbery. This is not yet a major problem, but it would be sensible to programme for the replacement of a few small sections each year to help maintain high standards, rather than letting it build up into a major future problem

Section B

Consider how local heritage could be better displayed e.g. interpretation boards explaining the developing natural habitats and wildlife. Possibly a viewfinder/indicator at the highest point of Lark Hill relating it to its surrounding history and landscape.

Spot kill the Dock plants to prevent further spread in the meadow areas.

Complete the development of the composting facility for all green waste.

Scope exists for more benches especially on the hill and near the pond

Section C

Extend the interest and knowledge of Garden Club members through a programme of talks and visits.

Continue to build evidence of year round involvement and initiatives to attract funding and support for the campaign.

Supply news releases of general interest to the local media from time to time e.g. plans to keep bees and create more wildflower areas

A: 79 B: 42 C: 39 Total: 160

VILLAGE

Middleton by Wirksworth

Silver Gilt Award 156 points

Judged on 16th July

Judges: Doug Stacey and Robin Allan

Judges Award: To Middleton School for inspiring children's interest in their grounds, the local allotment and street planters.

Middleton continues to make progress in EMIB. A number of organisational changes are underway. These will help towards reaching the village's full potential in the future.

Much of the village is 1000ft above sea level and the former industrial scars on the landscape caused by mining and quarrying are now transformed into a wildflower rich landscape. This is interspersed with many tracks commanding superb views, widely used by walkers, cyclists and horse riders.

Appropriately as the start of WWI is remembered, a commemorative stone and interpretation panel has been provided to remember the part played by Middleton's quarries and stonemasons. The village supplied the headstones for fallen servicemen to the War Graves Commission. Well over 100,000 headstones were produced, and this is but one example of Middleton's rich local and natural heritage

Areas of Achievement

Section A

Great joy was expressed when news was announced on the visit that Middleton has acquired ownership of its village green. The excellence of the Duke Field sheltered housing front gardens.

The environmental/horticultural education provided for children at the village school, and the way this is extended into the community.

The introduction of the Best Garden competition stimulating many very good entries, and the refurbishment of the lovely Millennium Garden – now underway

Section B

Excellent standard of cleanliness and the voluntary litter picks. The Cutting Shed heritage plaque recognising the national importance of the stone industry. The painting by volunteers of the old bus shelter. The many good examples of conservation, biodiversity and heritage not least at Middleton Top Quarry.

Section C

The distribution of information about Bloom activities in the Village Pump.

The successful merger of 2 volunteer groups into a unified MIB, and the commendable partnerships with other village groups. The highly effective Open Gardens weekend raising both awareness and finance. The Knit and Natter's knitted and crocheted poppies to be used in WWI commemorations

Areas for Development

Section A

Development of facilities for horticultural courses at the Eco Centre is progressing, but further practical teaching areas are needed to cover the full syllabus. New permanent planting at the village hall is commendable, but consider further prominent floral displays to be visible from the road, inviting passers by to recognise its important central role in the village. Floral displays were contributed by the Nelson and the Rising Sun but encourage both establishments to make larger, bolder displays with a greater impact on the frontage of their premises and at the crossroads. Similarly, now the ownership of the Green is secured, provide a greater floral impact at this prominent site. Consider raising the quality of hanging baskets further, by using consistent composts, and possibly larger baskets to help sustain the displays over a longer period. Encourage more informal displays of potted plants alongside the gable ends of houses on the main street

Section B

Continue the re-staining of all timbers in the Millennium Garden. At future judgings provide more information on recycling. The idea of enhancing entrances to the village with stone signs is applauded, being appropriate to the countryside and the village's heritage

Section C

Pursue the idea of using the restored bus shelter as a Bloom information point.

Continue to build a village wide volunteer resource and the wonderful community spirit and sense of pride evident in the village. Very well done!

A: 71 B: 44 C: 41 Total: 156

VILLAGE

Habrough in Bloom

Bronze Award 117 points

Judged on 14th July

Judges: Doug Stacey & Robin Allan

Judges Award: For the outstanding quality hanging baskets at The Card Shop

The village of Habrough decided only a matter of months ago to enter the EMIB competition for the first time. The judges were impressed by the number of initiatives taken during this short period of time and by the energy and enthusiasm shown by the organisers and volunteers involved. There is clearly a lot of potential for a well organised Bloom campaign to do well and make significant improvements to the village over the next few years. It was encouraging to see a very good start has been made. Well done Habrough and thank you for your warm welcome

Areas of Achievement

Section A

The high quality hanging baskets at The Stables Card Emporium. The attractive gardens to the sides and rear of the village hall, designed to be wildlife friendly and offer delightful views to the church. The landscape improvements made to Chapel Lane, St Margaret's Crescent, Laurels Close and the station corner. Many attractive residential gardens stimulated by an existing Best Front Garden competition

Section B

The delightful, publicly accessible Country Park created by local resident Trevor Oliver, still under development. The grant aided extensive planting of trees and wildflowers plus pond digging by Humberinc at the Play Park. The preparation and sowing of wildflower seeds donated by a local factory at a vacant site on Chapel Lane, and the good standard of cleanliness round the village

Section C

The successful initiatives taken by the small group of hard working volunteers over recent months.

The presence of the Grimsby Telegraph and Estuary TV demonstrated campaigning potential as did the public presentation of a £1000 grant aid cheque from a local charity at the end of the judging.

The use of the vintage red telephone box at Chapel Lane as the Habrough In Bloom information centre

Areas for Development

Section A

Consider improving first impressions of the village hall by providing welcoming floral displays at the frontage, and signpost the garden to the rear.

It is understood that next year improvements will be made around the village sign by the Bowls Club.

Consider how all entry points to the village could be improved by further landscaping.

Encourage all landowners/businesses to collectively make an increased floral impact at the Station Road junction.

Consult all interested parties on the development of a phased improvement plan for the Play Park to ensure that it attracts and meets the needs of the whole community. Consider the provision of mini allotments in this plan or elsewhere in the village

Section B

Liaise with N. E. Lincs Council to ensure that weed killer drift damage is avoided e.g Laurels Close.

Chapel Close utility boxes – a motley collection! Explore whether they can be simplified, landscaped or presented more uniformly.

Provide more country style benches for seating in Habrough Country Park

Section C

There appears to be a varied range of volunteers. Develop a Bloom coordinating committee to include representatives of all community interests e.g. Gardening Club, Village Hall committee, Art Group, Parish and District Councils, businesses, young people, and a forward plan to help direct and prioritise future action.

At future judgings produce a portfolio which shows evidence of your all year round activity – spring planting displays, fundraising events, recycling performance and press and publicity engagement

A: 58 B: 30 C: 29 Total: 117

LARGE VILLAGE

🏆 **Caistor** **Gold Award and Category Winner – 179 points**

🏆 **East Midlands in Bloom Committee Award** For the community effort at Caistor

Judged on 11th July Judges: Peter Benham and Jo Tarrant

Judges Award: For the design, planting and maintenance of Crocosmia Gardens

The judges were given an interesting tour of Caistor, travelling on foot, in an open horse drawn carriage and in a black presidential style limousine. We met all sectors of the community from the fire service, parish council, the kindergarten, postmaster, the local police officer all making the community bloom. Business support was also very good with financial contributions and goods in kind being donated to make the many Bloom projects happen. The tour ended at the White Hart where members of the community all joined together for a lunch

Areas of Achievement

Section A

The use of a themed colour scheme in the Market Place was excellent, unifying the space and coordinating the variety of black planters. Some difficult and previously interesting corners of the village have been planted with a wide choice of appropriate perennials, dry spots, shady areas and damp areas have all been tackled. We were very impressed with the residential and community planting and how different groups have taken responsibility for planting and maintaining their bit of the village. This spans from Bus Shelters, The Police Office, Fire Station, Post Office to the planted banks of Crocosmia Car park

Section B

Sustainable Caistor successfully encourages the public to have a better understanding and appreciation of the wildlife in the locality. The management of Syter Spring was a good example of encouraging nature in an area surrounding by housing. There were very no major instances of Litter or failings in the environmental quality during the tour. The local heritage is highlighted with many plaques seen throughout the tour

Section C

During the tour we met a number of representatives who were genuinely very enthusiastic and passionate about their involvement in Caistor in Bloom. The funding, sponsorship and goods in kind is substantial and it is clear that the community, councils and business are all very much behind the aims of the bloom. The publicity for the Bloom and promotional information ensures that there is very good coverage locally. This informs the population of what is happening and how they can take part

Areas for Development

Section A

It would be useful if the park had a long term Master plan so that any new features such as planting and new features fit into an overall design. Care should be taken with mixing some of the planting styles; in one instance a brightly coloured busy hanging basket was close to some more tranquil ferns

Section B

We liked the introduction of wild flower plugs within the parish church, although we questioned the timing as any plug planting in the Summer will need watering to establish. In a couple of areas the surface of the stone paving and highway has eroded badly causing a rough and uneven surface

Many of the buildings on the route are in very good repair unfortunately there are a few where the appearance could be improved and impact on the streetscape

Section C

Over the last year there are various projects that have been delivered; we were also told by a number of groups that they have plans and ambition for the future. What might assist the Bloom and its partners is to have a 3 or 5 year Forward Plan providing some detail of ongoing and new project proposals. This would define a priority and identify what resources need to be found. More complex projects could also be tackled where planning, consultation, design, preparation and securing funding may take time to deliver

A: 88 B: 42 C: 49 Total: 179

LARGE VILLAGE

Market Bosworth

Gold Award 170 points

Frank Constable Award for the Best Residential Garden: Mr David Harrison, Rainbow Cottage

Judged on 9th July

Judges: Peter Benham & Jo Tarrant

Judges Award: For creating two World War 1 commemorative flowerbeds

Market Bosworth is a busy large village and the judging took place on a market day. Every shop, pub and business has at least one window box, trough or hanging basket and residential properties also keeping in tune to the colour theme chosen by the Bloom committee. A good balance is struck between the amount of planting, without masking the architectural beauty of the many listed buildings. This year two features commemorate the start of World 1 with a life size horse made of willow and flower beds in regimental colours designed by the Bloom group, and a long thin bed adjacent to Dixie Grammar school and designed by pupils, creates a scene after a battle in Flanders with poppies and thought provoking poetry

Areas of Achievement

Section A

There is an abundance of attractive colour themed floral baskets and features around the Market Place. Every local business in the village is encouraged to be involved. The two commemorative beds for World War I Centenary undertaken by the Bloom with the Willow Horse and the bed designed by the Dixie Grammar School are excellent. Both beds have interpretation boards and there has been in depth research into their design. During our visit we saw a number of examples of residential front gardens who maintain their garden to very high standards

Section B

During the visit we saw that litter was being well managed and apart from a few instances dog fouling was controlled. There were also no vacant shop premises. The wildflower area on Bosworth Country Park which is monitored and managed with the assistance of the Natural History Society is steadily expanding in size and improving in quality. Market Bosworth has many historic buildings which have been conserved and included within the Town Trail. This provides an excellent backcloth to the entry

Section C

The Bloom raises funds for a variety of sources. It also receives considerable local support from its partners including the Parish Council and various Businesses. Participation is very good with every shop and house having at least a trough, basket or window box in full bloom. A wide range of community groups including Schools, Bowls Club, Natural History Society and Royal British Legion are involved

Areas for Development

Section A

Consideration should be given to the use and rejuvenation of the Memorial garden. At present the area is quite enclosed and has limited seating. Many of the floral displays rely on the use of annual bedding plants and perhaps in some areas more perennial plants could be incorporated into planting schemes. The route around the Country Park needs more detailed examination as a number of trees require attention with stake removal, some support ties replaced and the areas around the tree bases defined

Section B

Some of the seating, signage and street furniture could be improved with a regular cleaning and a painting programme. More information should be given about domestic recycling and the opportunities investigated to use composted garden waste processed by the Council, in Bloom projects as a soil improver. Consideration should also be given on how you might encourage more responsible dog ownership in the wild flower meadow. This would reduce contamination and allow the cut material to be recycled. At present the Bloom uses tap water to irrigate all of the floral features. Given the numbers of buildings in the village there may be opportunities to supplement your usage by harvesting rainwater

Section C

The introductory presentation could be improved to illustrate using a short digital slide show progress and participation on key projects. The work at the Heritage Railway, Allotments which were not visited and evidence seasonal planting/ autumn colour are also ideal topics. Market Bosworth has a number of events throughout the year which assist in supporting the Bloom and village life. A list of the events activities each month or season should be shown to the judges. Within the portfolio there is evidence of your current projects. It would be good to list what your ambitions and projects are for the next 5 years. Two ideas are improvements to the Memorial Garden and your 30 years (1985-2015) in the Bloom?

A: 90 B: 41 C: 39 Total: 170

LARGE VILLAGE**Little Eaton in Bloom****Silver Award 125 points**Judged on 10th July

Judges: Peter Benham & Jo Tarrant

Judges Award: For a well organised promotional campaign creating strong "Bloom awareness"

A chance visit to the village by Jeff Bates led these first time entrants to embrace the idea of transforming their village through the power of the Bloom! Already, most corners of the village have seen improvement with local businesses happy to join in the process. There is good support from villagers, Parish Council, District Council and the local MP. They have grand ideas for further makeovers across the village and 2015 should be an exciting time in Little Eaton

Areas of Achievement

Section A

The general improvement of so many little grot spots, by the use of summer planting, perennials or simply painting. Croft corner has been transformed to a central focal point of village life.

Floral displays by the businesses especially the Butchers shop and Manor Pharmacy, consider asking them to tie in their colour themes with the new Council Baskets next year

Section B

Recycling - the two public phone boxes into the Art box and the Book Box, is a great idea and an inspiring way to promote Bloom, consider a plant swap box somewhere?

The meadow area in St Peter's Park and the excellent bug hotel made by the Beavers, decide when the meadow is to be cut and how that will encourage required plant species

Section C

The Carnival week was a really good opportunity seized to promote the new Bloom venture.

The Gardening club is a great way to attract keen and knowledgeable gardeners on to the Bloom Committee, consider fact finding missions to other Bloom groups.

Really good to see a well presented portfolio, with a well thought out plan for the coming year projects and evidence of winter works/ displays.

Areas for Development

Section A

The ivy corner by the old railway line could be developed further, it is a large space and you could have some big ideas for in there.

Consider what you would like to see through the Canal eye, an industrial estate, a mock up of the canal and waterside planting or maybe even a well dressing in summer.

Check the pavilion walls for graffiti and if deemed a problem consider engaging with a graffiti artist to work with the village youths in creating a specific wall for them somewhere

Section B

Work with the authorities to make the old railway into a haven for wildlife and walkers, try to organise interpretation boards before and after the improvement works are undertaken.

Consult with the residents to see if there is a need for more than two litter picks in the village and react as necessary. Make sure the judges are shown or told about all conservation projects in the village, eg the WW1 Wild Flower area on Millennium way

Section C

Try to get more of the other local groups in the village involved with the Bloom, ie the Church group and more of the young people involved.

Consider where funding will come from next year and start the process of fund raising through the winter.

Encourage the school to do more gardening, help them run a gardening club and consider putting them on the Bloom route next year

A: 66 B: 25 C: 34 Total: 125

LARGE VILLAGE**Asfordby****Bronze Award 103 points**

Judged on 8th July

Judges: Peter Benham and Jo Tarrant

Judges Award: For the community's effort in creating the lovely village entrance and gateway beds.

Dodging the showers the 4 Peters, Daphne and not forgetting Keith, had a tour of the village. Numerous lovely front gardens, including Bradgate Flats made up the back bone of the tour, with the dedicated team of gardeners showing the judges their recent improvements to village entrances and junctions. Last year the first village show was held which proved very successful. It is hoped that this annual event will encourage more local interest in the Bloom

Areas of Achievement

Section A

The wooden planters at the numerous junctions and village entrances are a visual improvement to the village.

The bulb planting across the village shows a sustainable approach to enhancing the village.

Bradgate Flats were a great starting point for the tour, consider meeting there at the start, it would be lovely to meet some of the residents and hear how much they enjoy their gardens.

Section B

The meadow is showing promising signs of a developing diverse mix of species and it has some good interpretation signs as well.

It was good to see some water butts on the sheds and composting at the Allotments, try to encourage more water saving and composting generally across the village.

The pond is being well managed just ensure non-native/invasive species are not encouraged or introduced

Section C

The donations and planting of bulbs across the village, try to show more evidence in the portfolio.

The events, from quizzes to plant sales are a good example of how the group raises money and the profile of the village.

The success of the first "village show" is very good news and we hope the show will continue to grow.

Areas for Development

Section A

Consider if some of the areas planted with bedding could be planted with perennials to add additional height and ease the need for watering.

Try to get all the Councils to work together to get a more uniform grass cutting regime.

Encourage more of the businesses in the village to have real floral displays and make more of the area outside of the shops, creating central focal point of the village

Section B

Talk to the Leicestershire Wildlife Trust about how best to manage the meadow, in case there is a locally rare species which could be targeted for help. Try to show some elements of local heritage on the tour, to build up a picture of what makes Asfordby special. Consider if a "friends group" could take on and help with the cemetery maintenance

Section C

Try to plan the route to cover as many of the Bloom criteria as possible, if things can't be shown on the day include them in the portfolio.

Work together with the other groups in the village to extend the reach of the "Bloom".

Try to work with the school children, encourage gardening and put one of the schools on the tour if possible

A: 55 B: 22 C: 26 Total: 103

LARGE VILLAGE

Barrow upon Humber in Bloom Bronze Award 102 points

Judged on 11th July

Judges: Jo Tarrant and Peter Benham

Judges Award: For renovation of the Beck Pump and the surrounding bed.

Barrow on Humber is a naturally picturesque village, the community here has rallied round to create an impressive first Bloom entry. Only joining the Bloom this spring they have already made a big impact, on the village, especially with regards to the Wheel Barrow competition and the plans for the new Market place.

Areas of Achievement

Section A

Considering the Bloom group only started in April, big efforts have been made to improve the village. There are new entrance gateway beds with new signage and seven new floral beds. The Bowls Club with their hanging baskets and the self-maintained green was lovely, are there other clubs, community spaces which could be part of the Bloom?

Section B

The Better Barrow consultation and design work for the new market place landscaping works. The use of the connections to John Harrison for the gateway signs and promoting the profile of the village in general. The footpath survey by the "Lifestyle" group, help them to get in touch with the Council and action the improvement works where feasible

Section C

With 71 Wheelbarrows in this year's competition and 17 gardens in the open garden scheme, this is a fantastic vehicle for promoting the Bloom competition and encouraging more volunteers to help. The £10,000 awards for all grant for the improvement of Midby Park. The contribution of the various "Lifestyle" groups whose efforts across the village are very visible

Areas for Development

Section A

The entrance beds, consider the scale and setting plus the maintenance of beds before extending or creating new ones. Perennial plants with attractive foliage can add height, all year interest and are cost effective. Encourage all the pubs and businesses to make the most of their frontages. Consider putting one of the best open gardens on to the judging route, especially if its frontage is on public display. Midby Park has the potential to be a lovely village park; ensure carefully site design, planning and consultation takes place before the renovation works begin, talk to the builders and planners about Section 106 contributions. Also consider if small floral beds in the park are appropriate for a more naturalised landscape

Section B

Try to incorporate a wildlife site on the Bloom tour, if there are no sites in the village work towards creating one; Midby Park has that potential. Continue the good work of the Lifestyle group in the renovation of street furniture and benches across the village. The Church is a dominate feature of the village explore the scope of this to be part of the Bloom. Tell us more about your domestic recycling, do you compost or harvest rain water?

Section C

Ensure the Bloom group becomes a constituted group and opens a bank account to ensure all donations of funds and in kind-labour is well documented. Consider having a "little Bloomers" group for those youngsters who have completed the "lifestyle" scheme. Consider appropriate sized sponsorship signs on the new planters to highlight the contributors and the beds connected with Barrow in Bloom, with a contact number for anyone wishing to be involved.

A: 48 B: 25 C: 29 Total: 102

SMALL TOWN

🏆 Uppingham Gold Award and Category Winner, 175 points
🏆 Best Hotel Garden, sponsored by the Art Department: The Falcon Hotel

Judged on 7th July

Judges: Jeff Bates and Jo Hull

Judges Award: The Heritage Tour

A morning tour of the town began and ended at the Cricket Club. Karen Emery and Rob Fisher led the tour, taking in highlights including the Arboretum, Stockerston Road, Baines Corner and the Falcon Hotel, before concluding with lunch for all the available volunteers and helpers back at the Cricket Club. Here we were able to explore in more detail the extensive research carried out to identify and commemorate residents of the town who fell in the Great War, having seen the involvement of Uppingham in Bloom to display this at North Street East Car Park during the tour

Areas of Achievement

Section A

The starting point for this section must be the total involvement and commitment of Uppingham School in almost all that takes place in the town. Rob and his team are fully integrated into the Bloom effort, and with so much of the school grounds fully accessible via footpaths, being shared use facilities such as the exceptional Sports Centre, or just simply on full view as they border the streets and roads of the town, the impact of this mass display of high quality design and maintenance cannot be overstated. Special mention goes to the new formal garden by the Science Centre, the Arboretum, planting on School Lane and outside the boarding houses.

Although the school is a dominant feature in the town, much else is highly commendable, with the work by the pupils at Leighfield School as good as ever, the Bloom allotment developing well, colourful planting at Baines and Dairy Corner, many excellent residential gardens (e.g. on New Town Road, The Beeches, Gainsborough Road and North Street East), spectacular hotel gardens at The Garden Hotel and the Falcon Hotel, and many contributions by individual businesses and shops. Entrance beds to the town are sponsored and very attractive.

We were impressed with the consistent colour themes throughout the town used in the containers and baskets. Public open space is well managed – excellent verge mowing in particular – and in Tod's Piece, the new Rutland landscape has established better than the most optimistic forecast could have expected

Section B

Some of last year's success stories have continued to progress, notably the excellent composting operation at the School, where all the 'Bloom' waste goes and which provides high-quality compost for use in beds and borders throughout the town, including Tod's Piece and Leighfield School.

The Arboretum is a natural haven in the town, but has been carefully managed to enhance its value by retention of dead trees, and by linking with long wildlife corridors through the town. Leighfield School includes on-site composting and recycling, as well as wildlife areas.

A remarkable upgrade of street furniture and general appearance in prominent areas has taken place since last year, with new finger posts, recycled seats, new railings and a superb Heritage Trail making a major positive impact.

The town is scrupulously clean, with no adverse impacts seen at any point of the tour.

Art is prominently displayed in the new garden at the Science Block, on Stockerston Road and of course most notably the remarkable Tod's Piece Landscape

Section C

Another tremendous effort from the town! Involvement from all ages is evident, with Oliver, Imogen and Milly demonstrating knowledge and enthusiasm at Leighfield Academy, young people volunteering as part of Uppingham in Bloom to achieve their Duke of Edinburgh's Award Scheme, and engagement with businesses, other community groups, the Town and County Council evident throughout the visit.

Rutland Radio, through the support of Rob Persani, continues to be excellent, and does the publicity generated by UiB's own website and twitter account.

Many projects continue, and funding is secure into the future through excellent business support, successful grant aid, fund-raising activities such as the lottery, Cheese and Wine, and the Autumn Ball

Areas for Development

Section A

Continue to progress the development of the most unusual Bloom Allotment; whilst this is progressing well, it is also rather let down by the vacant plot immediately adjacent to it. We also look forward to seeing the continued development of the main roundabout, where work was taking place on the day of our visit as part of a 5-year refurbishment.

The glorious garden at the Falcon Hotel is about to undergo substantial change as the site is extended; we hope and expect that the existing standards will be maintained and that the new developments will be a great opportunity for further success

Section B

Amongst all the new and refurbished street furniture, the rather shabby seats at Baines Corner stand out and should be considered for a scrub and repaint.

The wildlife corridor on the Cinder Track would be worthy of consideration for inclusion on future judging tours.

Section C

We recognise that there are good reasons for letting the Arboretum retain a very natural feel, but also consider that such a remarkable tree collection should have some form of easily accessed information available. You may wish to consider posting a web-link to the information if a leaflet is difficult to manage or tree identification labels are considered too intrusive.

Year-round activity is mentioned in the excellent portfolio but could perhaps have been better presented at the final gathering – which, whilst very enjoyable, was not easy to meet and chat to people as well as study the year-round activity boards and eat some of the delicious lunch that you provided.

A: 87 B: 43 C: 45 Total: 175

SMALL TOWN**Bakewell**Judged on 9th July**Silver Gilt Award 168 points**

Judges: Jeff Bates and Jo Hull

Judges Award: The Riverside Garden

Bakewell continues to be a joy to visit - a lively tour led by Julia with Carol, Corinne, George, Paul and Vicky. The tour included the familiar highlights of the Bath Gardens and Riverside Gardens as well as the delightful Beech House and emerging school garden, which are new for this year, ending at the Pointing Dog & Duck

Areas of Achievement

Section A

The planters from Pinelog have been thoughtfully planted up, creating colourful displays throughout the town - the black planters outside the coffee shop make a particularly striking impact. Good horticultural practice is demonstrated in the stunning Bath Gardens and Riverside Gardens, with Beech House showcasing beautiful, considered design. Pride for Bakewell in Bloom from the Community and Businesses is clearly evident when walking around and well documented in the portfolio. Most notable are the grounds of Milford House and TC Harrison, looked after by Tim. Mrs Brotherton must have a special mention for her joyful garden and hanging baskets. The judges were impressed to hear that Bakewell in Bloom have been asked to grow perennials for the vicarage

Section B

The overall cleanliness of the town is impressive – there was no sign of dog fouling or graffiti and litter was minimal. The school have made a good start on their wildlife habitats. The judges were encouraged by the steady move towards more sustainable planting. The impressive sedum roof of the Old House Museum maintained by the incredibly knowledgeable George is a real achievement to be proud of. The traditional methods used to create the mosaic well dressings are highly commendable. The creation of the Secret Garden, raised planters and fruit and veg area at The Manners Hotel is a delight and an unexpected surprise

Section C

It was great to see the BiB logo and window stickers, L'Eroica displays and the Growing for Gold and Green Festival promotions throughout the town. These events are also well documented in the portfolio. Again, the community, volunteer and business support is excellent and we wish you the best of luck with managing the DEFRA Sustainability Planting grant. It is encouraging to hear of your partnership building with Costa, the Medway Centre, Pinelog and the Haddon Estate to name but a few and of your involvement in the development of the Neighbourhood Plan

Areas for Development

Section A

It is encouraging to see the comments from last year have been taken on board and the school has been included in the tour. We very much look forward to seeing how the story telling, allotment and pond areas develop.

The judges recognise the grass cutting and maintenance of the churchyard and other public areas is beyond the control of Bakewell in Bloom. Continue to build stronger links with the council to support each other as this is the one area that lets the town down.

There are brackets on the front of the Police Station and it is a little disappointing not to see hanging baskets on them, considering the standards and efforts made elsewhere in the town

Section B

Consider stopping and spending more time at the conservation area when leaving the office – this is an interesting green space and the judges want to learn more about it. A representative from the Derbyshire Wildlife Trust or Haddon Estate would be a real asset.

A good effort has been made with the wildflower area in the churchyard; explore the possibilities for extending it. The judges noted recycling facilities but no attention was drawn to them. Various maps, interpretation panels and notice boards are also placed around the town. These are all important features of Bakewell and are worth a mention in the future

Section C

Although there is no strict format to EMiB tours and presentations, you may want to consider doing a more formal 15 minute presentation and having the display boards at the start of the tour. This helps to set the scene and give an overview of your achievements at the start.

The tour takes in many interesting, high quality areas, features and people and can be a sensual, horticultural feast. By taking a more organised, structured and focused approach to delivering the tour, it will run smoothly, flow better and keep to time

A: 84 B: 42 C: 42 Total: 168

SMALL TOWN**Long Sutton****Silver Gilt Award 167 points**

Judged on 10th July

Judges: Jeff Bates & Jo Hull

Judges Award: Annie's Patch

Twenty Three years on and the Long Sutton in Bloom team are still blooming marvellous at what they do. The passion of the volunteers has been woven into every planter and hanging basket and the beautiful Annie's Patch has matured into a corner plot paradise. Long Sutton is certainly saying it with flowers

Areas of Achievement

Section A

Once again, Annie's Patch, the beautifully planted Garnsgate and Gedney Triangles, Cowpers Gate and the churchyard hydrangeas impressed the judges. A welcome surprise this year came from the refurbishment of the Pop-Bottle Garden and the new eye-catching community mosaic. The judges were also pleased to see their previous comments about the Co-op beds had been taken on board. The continued support from business with their investment in the hanging baskets and attractive window displays is encouraging and cements the town's commitment to Long Sutton in Bloom

Section B

Long Sutton is consistently free of litter, graffiti and detritus with very little evidence of dog fouling. The sculptural litter bins and bike racks on the High Street are a nice touch. Your partnership working with the Co-op, Hendersons Yard and the water harvesting demonstrates excellent resource management. The facilities and commitment to growing and maintaining your plants is highly commendable

Section C

The LSiB campaign is clearly thriving and very well documented in the portfolio and opening presentation. The inclusion of volunteer hours is an excellent lever for match funding and being able to quantify your time. Jessica, Hannah and Jasmine made an excellent job of showcasing their school composting methods, recycled sandpit, raised beds and the roadside orchard. Again, you have consistently impressive numbers of committed volunteers and positive levels of fund raising. All in all, you are an exemplary In Bloom team

Areas for Development

Section A

On first impression, the Begonia 'Sherbet Bon-Bon' seemed an unusual colour choice given the number of light stone and buff coloured buildings they were hanging from, as they almost got lost. However, the BiB Golden Anniversary theme was a big hit!

Section B

Common Pit has great potential for increasing the biodiversity and conservation of Long Sutton – we look forward to seeing how the refurbishment develops.

As mentioned on previous tours, access to The Shrubberies and a short talk from Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust would be particularly beneficial. There is a hidden wealth of conservational interest here, celebrate it!

Section C

Again, as mentioned last year, the presentation is good but the inclusion of new and developing projects would update it.

The tour is well thought out, well timed and well planned but consider including some new highlights, for example, stopping at The Shrubberies, the college or an allotment. This will help to keep your campaign fresh and introduce new elements.

The viewing of the private garden from the path through the park really didn't add any value to the tour. Consider spending this time visiting a new highlight.

A: 84 B: 40 C: 43 Total: 167

SMALL TOWN**Darley Dale****Silver Gilt Award 164 points**Judged on 9th July

Judges: Jeff Bates & Jo Hull

Judges Award: The new garden at RBS and support from RBS employees

A beautiful summer morning set the scene for Darley Dale's third year 'In Bloom', led by Lyn, Ian and Mike. The enthusiasm and passion from the group and community continues to blossom throughout the town. This year's highlight and treat for the judges was undoubtedly the horse and carriage tour of Whitwell Park, driven by Caroline. The group have consistently taken on board judges' comments from the previous years and has resulted in a well-planned, considered and interesting tour

Areas of Achievement

Section A

The new RBS bed and signage creates a real village green ambience to a previously bland area – well done to Yolanta and the team. The new picnic area at the station provides a peaceful and pleasant environment. Sam, Hannah, Maddie and Owen did a great job in showcasing their school planters. St Helen's Close is an excellent example of residential planting and a real credit to its residents. The wow factor planting of Audley St Elphins continues to mature. The judges were very pleased to see the impact of the hanging baskets outside the Grouse Inn

Section B

The portfolio clearly documents the community's approach to their environmental responsibilities, particularly Darley Dale Primary School's bird box project. The Morledge Estate is an excellent example of how a modern design can be tastefully and sympathetically integrated with the surroundings by using traditional materials and stonewalling.

The 34 Churchtown Primary School Medals are a great idea and concept, really helping to unify WW1 celebrations with the In Bloom campaign.

Overall, Darley Dale is exceptionally immaculate and spotless (possibly something to do with HRH Queen Elizabeth II visiting but none the less, impressively clean).

Section C

The portfolio is excellent – comprehensive and well laid out, it clearly records the years highlights such as the well dressing, Bonfire Night and Fun Dog Show. The schools, church, Peak Rail and Red House Carriage Museum & Stables, to name but a few, are clearly key players in the community. The input from Yolanta and RBS is a shining example of how introducing new blood into your local In Bloom campaign can move things forward. Keep up the good work.

Areas for Development

Section A

The judges look forward to seeing the development of the school pond area and how the children will influence the design of the area.

Whilst the 'blooming up' of the Grouse Inn is commendable, the judges feel that funds allowing, the addition of green screen or long planters would be a welcome addition to the large expanse of concrete, which still remains dreary

Section B

It will be interesting to see how the group manage the forthcoming ownership of the town's planting and how you develop the opportunities it creates and the challenges it presents – good luck.

The conservation and environmental impact of the Meadow View Centre is very exciting and should not be overlooked in the future – there is a lot of potential here to gain biodiversity points!

Section C

The presentation was excellent but do keep an eye on the timing – it was 30mins! An overview of your highlights from the past year that evidences each section will suffice

A: 83 B: 38 C: 43 Total: 164

SMALL TOWN**Draycott in Bloom****Silver Gilt Award 154 points**

Judged on 15th July

Judges: Jeff Bates & Ian Beaney

Judges Award: Welly-boots and Wheelbarrows

A remarkable first time entrant, with the whole place awash with flowers and colour, and evidence throughout the tour of tremendous levels of engagement with the community. The anniversary of the start of World War 1 was evident in the chosen colour scheme, and a commemoration event, including a wreath laying, was part of the day at the new garden created by the Bloom team as part of the anniversary. The theme of 'welly boots and wheelbarrows' has been taken up with enthusiasm everywhere! This is a vibrant community with great plans, and prospects, for the future

Areas of Achievement**Section A**

Floral enhancements abounded in the well-organised walking tour; a red, white and blue theme was consistently used in baskets, most of which were planted up by the Bloom team, with support from Erewash Borough Council. All were very well-furnished. The assault of the wellington boots (and wheelbarrows) dripping with flowers on walls, fences, gates and even trees was inspirational.

Individual businesses had contributed to their own displays, as well as sponsoring some of the lamp-post baskets; The Coach and Horses and the Victoria pubs were both colourful, as was the Garage.

Very attractive permanent and seasonal planting was seen at the Methodist Church.

Draycott in Bloom has created a WW1 border at South Street, where they have also cleared an overgrown shrub and tree area, leaving it now tidy and well-mulched.

Very colourful, well-maintained and planted residential gardens were seen throughout the tour, with the area of Walk Close and on Market Street particularly noteworthy.

The embellishments of street corners with floral features is most appealing, with the Derby Road / Hopwell Road corner a notable example

Section B

The garden at the Primary School is mainly a wildlife garden and includes a pond, woodland area and various habitat piles etc; there are also bird and bug boxes in place at the new South Street Garden.

You have made excellent use of free well-rotted horse manure from a local farmer for soil amelioration; there are also splendid examples of re-use of waste materials to become containers, with the wheels and tyres being dramatic, especially in the carefully considered matching planting and location at the bus shelter.

The tour was exceptionally clean, with no litter, fly-posting or dog-fouling to be seen anywhere. It was also pleasing to note that most of the litter bins had been recently emptied.

Many of the seats seen have been refurbished; the 'Victorian' lampposts are charming; many of the original street signs have been retained and refurbished by DiB volunteers; the basket feature at the Christmas tree site is a clever improvisation. Your theme, to commemorate the outbreak of the Great War, has been well-considered and implemented, and we also appreciated the use of gold at the street corner signs to celebrate the Golden Jubilee of

Britain in Bloom

Section C

Remarkable community gardening has been taking place here, with the South Street rejuvenation and the makeovers at nos 6 and 8 Lodge Street particularly notable. It is hard to overstate the value of your efforts here, both in the visible impact but perhaps more so in the development and sustainability of the community.

Lovely work is taking place at the Draycott Primary School, where the representatives of the garden club (Lucy, Cleo, Lauren and the appropriately named Poppy and Rose) were excellent advocates and speakers for their work.

Tremendous levels of fund-raising are taking place; business support and that from individuals are both excellent. Visible bloom efforts are splendid, with the pennants being a fine example, and very high levels of awareness evident everywhere.

You have worked throughout to a well-considered plan, and everyone has bought into this; you have also clearly thought out intentions for future activity to carry on the Bloom impact.

Areas for Development

Section A

Grass verges are not maintained as well as the features that you have on and near them, and you may wish to discuss with the relevant authorities where improvements may be made.

The tour should if possible be planned to take in at least one area of open 'green space', for example the Millennium Green, a park or a cemetery. Please try to amend the route to take this into account next time.

Consider blending some of the older shrub planting alongside the toilets at the Square with some herbaceous perennial planting

Section B

Research more of your 'visible' heritage, for example the mills that are now residential, and see if more prominence can be given as part of your efforts. These are permanent features of the entry, as distinct from linked to a particular date, and would be worthy of greater integration into the entry.

We appreciated the efforts of the School to demonstrate bio-diversity. However, it is clear from your portfolio that the real highlight here is St Chad's Water at Church Wilne, so we strongly recommend that future visits take the judges here for a short viewing. This would also be an opportunity to show off the 'Coffin Walk', another example of your heritage

Section C

There is little to improve on here other than perhaps to make better use of the tour to show off relevant aspects. You had almost half-an-hour available that was not used, and that would have been ample to pull in Millennium Green and Church Wilne.

You may also look at providing the judges with a larger, better-laid out route map to enable them to concentrate on what they are seeing rather than having to ask about locations

A: 78 B: 34 C: 42 Total: 154

SMALL TOWN**Messingham****Silver Gilt Award 153 points****🏆 East Midlands in Bloom Best Wildflower and Conservation Trophy: Messingham Sand Quarry**Judged on 18th July

Judges: Jeff Bates & Richard Stephen

Judges Award: Grange Park Leisure Complex

The second year of Messingham's participation in East Midlands in Bloom once again showed that this is a solid and effective entry, with a very individual approach to getting the community involved by caring for specific areas near to where they reside, leading to colourful enhancement of small green spaces. The tour also took in a visit to the wonderful Sand Quarry Nature Reserve. Messingham in Bloom shows the potential for further progress in the Bloom campaign

Areas of Achievement

Section A

The judges were shown a range of good quality floral displays, many planted and maintained by local residents, throughout the tour. The War Memorial was looking particularly striking this year with contrasting colours of Begonias. Well done to The Stables Restaurant for their contribution. Residential gardens along the route were very good this year with some very innovative planting. Grass verges and islands were very neat and tidy thanks to many of the residents living close by. Holme Meadow and its' car park, the Memorial Playing Field and the Holy Trinity Church grounds were very impressive, well maintained and a credit to the town. Other plantings of note were outside the Library, the Co-op store, and Manley Court. The Grange Park Leisure Complex grounds were very good. Congratulations to Gina Spacey for her truly wonderful garden

Section B

Special mention to Grange Park Leisure Complex for allowing the 'Bloom' group to recycle their green waste on site. Great idea to redistribute your winter bedding to local residents. The Messingham Sand Quarry Nature Reserve is an absolute delight. Such a wide variety of flora and fauna across this huge SSSI asset. Wildflower Meadows, Reed Beds, Woodland etc. Messingham was very clean and tidy throughout with no signs of having a graffiti problem.

Section C

Excellent news that the 'in bloom' group are nominated as the Co-op's Community Champions. The commitment to the 'in bloom' cause throughout the community is highly commended. Some good partnership working with other organisations eg Wildlife Trust and Town Council.

Areas for Development

Section A

Consider taking the judges to the local school next year to see their gardening skills. It was a shame the judges didn't get the opportunity to walk past the War Memorial planting scheme, an excellent scheme and worthy of a closer inspection on a future tour. Try to persuade the Bowling Club to have a number of floral planters displayed on their site. To make life easier, it may be worth thinking about converting some of the bedding displays with more sustainable permanent planting. To give greater impact to the floral display at the Co-op, consider widening the border and turning the right angled corner into a half moon bed. It might be worth taking the judges on a short walking tour of the Grange Park Leisure Complex grounds

Section B

If not already doing so, consider re-using some of your winter bedding again next year. Benches in the Holy Trinity Church cemetery were of mixed quality. It might be an idea for the judges to meet up with representative from the Wildlife Trust to talk about its management and the partnership with the 'in bloom' group. Are there any leaflets promoting the Nature Reserve?

Section C

It would be useful for the judges if you could take the opportunity to give a short presentation (prior to the tour commencing) outlining what has been happening in Messingham over the last 12 months, particularly anything new. Try to encourage more businesses, particularly along the High St (eg Pooleys) to support the 'bloom' by doing their own 'thing'. Try to include as many 'press' articles and photographs as possible which relate to your 'in bloom' work throughout the year within your portfolio.(up to 15 double sided pages). Identifying future projects would be helpful to the judge in assessing Messingham's development. If you do not already have one it may be useful to form an 'in bloom' committee with members taken from all walks of the community which would help to spread the work load, help to plan future projects, organise and undertake tasks, encourage businesses to participate etc.

A: 77 B: 37 C: 39 Total: 153

SMALL TOWN**Crowland**Judged on 7th July**Silver Gilt Award 150 points**

Judges: Jeff Bates & Jo Hull

Judges Award: The Ros Knight Memorial Garden

The small and committed team that is Crowland in Bloom recruit other helpers and partners in their efforts to further enhance the lovely Fenland Town, dominated as it is by the historic Croyland Abbey. The team have taken on two major projects in the past year, with the creation of the Ros Knight Memorial Garden and the improvements to the road frontage of Trinity Court; both are already proving successful after only a few months, and we look forward to seeing their continued development.

Areas of Achievement

Section A

The Ros Knight Memorial Garden must take pride of place here, as it is well-conceived, located, executed and maintained – a most prominent and welcome feature as one travels along Postland Road.

Floral containers continue to be colourful, with the mix of permanent and seasonal planting working well as a means to reduce costs.

Very attractive residential gardens were seen on Postland Road (the garden of lilies is remarkable), and the baskets and containers on the properties by the War Memorial were lovely. The War Memorial itself has prominent seasonal planting, including the poppy fields and two new Ginkgo biloba trees.

The Rose Borders at the Abbey were colourful and appropriate, forming a lovely entrance to the historic site, where the Bloom group are also heavily engaged in the annual flower festival. The 2013 developments of the Bee Friendly and Edible Beds at the Library have progressed very successfully

Section B

Two particular highlights to mention are the Abbey 3,4,5 pre-school garden – there is no possible doubt in the fun and education achieved in the free-play wild garden here, with so much that is environmentally-friendly taking place; also the outstanding wildlife pond, being actively surveyed and monitored by Phil as we were there, and also being used by members of the public enjoying the nesting swans and many wildflowers and butterflies that are present. It was pleasing to note the positive comment from a visitor to the wildlife pond while we were there.

The contribution of Bettaland in providing tonnes of free recycled compost for the new areas of planting is of enormous value. They have also provided plants for your use at heavily discounted prices.

The 'bus shelter' has remained in excellent condition since your major refurbishment. You have also made good use of a vacant shop window to display your efforts. The town was very clean, and we were pleased to note that the Crowland Walking Group is engaged in litter-picking as part of their activity.

It is good to note that the Wildlife group have taken on the maintenance of the Bee Friendly garden

Section C

The two new projects that you have taken on have been quite substantial and are both entirely to be applauded. We were also pleased to note that future plans include work on the Peterborough Road town sign bed, where you may wish to consider the use of the existing post as a support for a Clematis or other suitable climbing plant rather than attempting to remove it.

The continued support from your many sponsors and others is excellent, and we should particularly note here the donation of bulbs by Taylor's of Holbeach, plants and compost from Bettaland, help from the local authority on turf clearance and support from The Old Copper Kettle in the form of our refreshments for the day.

You have an effective presence in the monthly Town Magazine and a Facebook 'Crowland Chatter' site to ensure that you are in contact with supporters and others

Areas for Development

Section A

A prominent 'weedy' verge border on Kemp Street would benefit greatly from the addition of a colourful annual wildflower mix, without either huge cost or effort being incurred.

The local authority should be encouraged to carry out some judicious tree work (pruning, crown-lifting) to the trees immediately behind the Ros Knight Memorial Garden.

Container planting is again colourful, but has not grown on as well as may have been expected. It may be worth looking at the feeding regime that is used to ensure that the balance of nutrients provided is appropriate for early in the season. We were also a little disappointed that the container by the library has not thrived – though the vandalism that took place may have been the major factor here.

Continue the care for and development of the Trinity Court project – a bold initiative for a small volunteer group such as yourselves

Section B

You may wish to reconsider the judging route to take in the allotments next time; these are (where present and well-used) a very important feature of a sustainable, environmentally-friendly Bloom entry.

You may wish to further pursue the highway authority with regard to verge maintenance and litter-picking of these areas.

You are already planning replacement or refurbishment of the seat at the Memorial Garden, which will greatly improve the use of the location

Section C

We appreciate that you always try to get local print media support, and would encourage you to persist in this.

The Abbey 3, 4, 5 school is wonderful; we also are aware that you have considered engaging with and visiting the other pre-school, and would encourage this if you feel it would be beneficial in increasing the spread of your influence.

Continue to encourage more people to join your group that is making continued and strenuous efforts to further enhance the lovely town of Crowland!

A: 75 B: 37 C: 38 Total: 150

SMALL TOWN**Ibstock****Silver Award 148 points**

Judged on 15th July

Judges: Jeff Bates & Ian Beaney

Judges Award: The Community Garden

The visit took in some attractive street scenes, the lovely cemetery and the outstanding Sence Valley Natural Park, before reaching the undoubted highlight of the Community Garden. The conclusion at St Denys church with refreshments, a chance to view some heritage displays and meet members of your Bloom community, formed an appropriate end of an afternoon in the town

Areas of Achievement

Section A

There is considerable impact provided by the colourful displays at Holmsdale Manor Nursery, on verge planting and on container displays around the town.

The work at the Community Garden is quite splendid, with perfectly trained espalier fruit trees a notable feature here. This is a most important feature in Ibstock, with a great future. Allotments (seen in two locations) are attractive, productive and well-managed. The gardens in the Under-5s play area are cheerful and bright. Residential gardens are attractive at locations throughout the tour, with those on Park Dale and the garden of Jean and Ivor Gimson being particularly striking.

The green spaces at the Cemetery are beautifully cared for, including a mowing regime that is sensitive to the wildlife value of short-mown but species rich lawn

Section B

Sence Valley Park is superb, and was very effectively shown to the judges by Sally and Alan; it is now a worthy part of the National Forest, and is demonstrating a range of habitat management, water management and conservation crafts most effectively. Ibstock in Bloom has also been responsible for planting wildflowers in areas such as Church Paddock. Girl Guides have been responsible for carrying out wildlife surveys in appropriate areas.

Good composting is in view at the Community Garden, and rainwater harvesting is taking place at the allotments. The Millennium art installation at the end of High Street is excellent, and deserving of greater prominence, demonstrating much of the history of Ibstock. We were also informed throughout of the extensive history and heritage present as we made our way around.

The route was clean, with little in the way of graffiti, fly-posting or litter. The campaign to minimise litter was very visible throughout and had effectively engaged young people in its production.

The mosaic at the Palace, and the Jubilee Clock, are both prominent examples of art in the landscape

Section C

The presentation of your recent achievements, and extensive plans for the future, shows the strength of community in Ibstock; it is pleasing to see that there is a solid base of support from a 'facilitating committee', with additional regular volunteers and good links with e.g. the Girl Guides in carrying out litter picks.

You are using your website and social media well; press releases are used effectively, and the presence of a reporter from the Coalville Times indicates that you are getting the message out about what is being done by liB to enhance the town.

Good links have been established with Community Payback as a means to get some of the larger jobs done. You have also a well-considered plan for gardening talks and demonstrations at the Community Garden, with which we hope you will persevere.

Good levels of support are being achieved, with regular successful grant bids including from the Coop. Small fund-raising events continue to successfully raise essential funds to assist in the voluntary efforts to enhance the public spaces

Areas for Development

Section A

Bedding displays are splendid, but they are often in verges that are not subject to good mowing regimes; consideration should be given to discussing this with the responsible bodies.

Municipal tree maintenance in Chandler's Croft should be reviewed

Section B

Try to have the results of the Girl Guides environmental surveys available – or even have some of the guides present to explain their findings.

Your heritage is quite splendid, and perhaps could be better integrated into the tour and more visibly evident to visitors to Ibstock. The mosaic artwork is an installation with a similar significance but lacking obvious interpretation

Section C

Try to increase the awareness of the gardening events at the Community Garden, as these are such a good idea and deserve to succeed.

Appeal to the relevant authorities to relocate the skate park now that it is clearly no longer appropriate in its current position.

Try to re-structure your portfolio of activities to be closer aligned to the recommendation.

Continue to build on the levels of support from members of the community of Ibstock for your efforts, as they do achieve tremendous benefit for the town

A: 75 B: 36 C: 37 Total: 148

SMALL TOWN**Holbeach****Silver Award 144 points**Judged on 10th July

Judges: Jeff Bates & Jo Hull

Judges Award: The poppy field in the recreation ground

The passion and enthusiasm for Holbeach in Bloom continues to blossom as the team, led by Graham and Stephen, stride forward. An impressive 116 hanging baskets from 61 sponsors lined the streets, along with abundantly planted troughs, admirably created and maintained by the planting team. The efforts made with re-painting the tubs and refurbishing the Wheatsheaf has made a major impact to the town. A notable highlight was the stunning flower bed of Remembrance - one of the best wildflower areas seen this year

Areas of Achievement

Section A

The hanging baskets and planters were of a very high standard. The troughs at the high street cross roads were particularly impressive. One cannot fail to be wowed by the wildflower area. The judges were pleased to see work had been undertaken to improve the tree line through the cemetery. The new community planted border in car park is a great idea as is the further development of the herb garden. Keep up the good partnership working so far with Tesco. The addition of the new planters to the Chequers Hotel has really helped to lift its drab appearance. The repetitive yellow green and white tubs in the church ground create a beautiful, high impact vista – a well thought through design. The allotments along the main road are well tended and a great community facility – it was worth the effort to visit them.

Section B

Wildlife can be seen in abundance at the nature reserve and it is encouraging to see the work of the Forest School and building of bird-boxes. Recycling and resource management is clearly taken seriously as evidenced by composting, bark shredding and rainwater harvesting. A recycling centre was also noted. There was little evidence of litter or dog fouling; a clean town in general. The mosaics create a striking focal point helping to give Holbeach a real sense of place. The refurbishment of the Wheatsheaf reflects the sense of pride held by the community

Section C

The continued dedication for Holbeach in Bloom from volunteers remains fantastic. The increasingly high support from local business is enviable – you clearly have the In Bloom magic touch when it comes to community engagement. The links with the schools, the press and social media are excellent. In particular, your unique HiB branding and bunting is a great identity tool. The year-round activities captured visually provide a good record of your achievements.

Areas for Development

Section A

Consider extending the wildflower area or creating similar meadows elsewhere – fantastic impact in public areas. Consider including residential gardens on the tour – we drove past some impressive front gardens without mentioning them.

Section B

The development of the Tree Trail around the town is on-going and we look forward to seeing how this progresses. It is recommended to remove the dead tree from the one of the containers next to the mosaics. Again, consider looking into interpretation panels for Carters Park stone artwork and continue to look into restoring the Chapel in the cemetery

Section C

The judges were pleased to see last year's comments had been taken on board regarding the structure of the tour – keep it up! The display boards were informative and the information given in the talk interesting. Consider using the 15min presentation time to merge the two together – images to illustrate the highlights presented will really help bring your work alive.

The tour took in some great sights and highlights, showcasing what the group have been doing over the last twelve months. Don't draw the judges' attention to anything negative or the things you haven't done. Focus on the positives – you have lots to be proud of! This is your chance to celebrate your achievements.

A: 75 B: 35 C: 34 Total: 144

SMALL TOWN**Blidworth**Judged on 18th July**Silver Award 136 points**

Judges: Jeff Bates & Richard Stephen

Judges Award: 1st Rainworth and Blidworth Cub scouts Group

Christine Dabbs once again led an interesting and enjoyable tour of the town, showing off the many activities that take place to enhance the community with horticultural features, artwork and most of all increasing engagement with the residents and groups who live and work in Blidworth. Blidworth Oaks School, the contribution of the Scouts, and the stunning floral displays at the Fox and Hounds were undoubted highlights. Well done on your continuing progress in East Midlands in Bloom!

Areas of Achievement

Section A

The overall quality of the floral displays throughout the tour, particularly at the Miners Welfare Social Centre, The Memorial Garden, Fire Station, Leisure Centre, Forest Folk Corner and the Fox and Hounds Pub. Good to see that Dale Lane Allotments are still being well maintained. We were impressed with the individual efforts made at the Sherwood Community and Methodist Churches. In the main, on the tour route, grass verges were being well maintained and the floral towers were very impressive.

Section B

Congratulations to Blidworth Oaks School for their excellent wildlife and natural habitat areas which include a pond, bird feeders, wild flower plantings, and butterfly garden. The judges were particularly impressed with the new vegetable garden, poly - tunnel and composters. Once again Blidworth's heritage shone through with Murals in the school, Rocking Cradle art work, Pit Wheel with town mosaic, and the War Memorial. The town was generally clean, tidy and litter free. Good to see the community are getting involved with litter picking and helping the town's 'handyman'.

Section C

Well done B J Bakeries for their hanging baskets. Good to see B & Q donated plants as part of their support to your 'bloom' entry. Congratulations to all the children who helped with planting the beautiful floral beds. Special mention for the 1st Rainworth and Blidworth Scout Group for their wildflower bed in Dale Lane. Good to see that the local 'Lions' and 'Rotary' groups are supporting the 'bloom'. A lovely idea to give out certificates and medals (courtesy of the Parish Council) to those children and volunteers who have worked so hard in helping to make Blidworth a lovely town.

Areas for Development

Section A

On the tour try to show more residential gardens which could significantly contribute to Blidworth's entry. Try to encourage more shop owners / businesses to support your entry by 'doing their own thing'. The planned developments taking place at the former Police House will hopefully contribute to the tour next year. If funds permitted it would be good to see Dale Lane Allotments have an entrance board promoting the site and the association

Section B

Try to develop a wildflower display outside of the school, why not at the entrance to Dale Lane Allotments or small pieces of waste land/ hard to grow areas located around the town. Consider trying to engage local residents or businesses to help look after / water some of the floral displays around the town. Look at developing any water catchment sites to make watering easier, (water butts adjoining buildings).

Section C

Tried to persuade T R Enterprises to support 'the bloom', they are located on a key site on the tour. Partnership working not only with schools and volunteers is important so try to engage other local businesses in Blidworth. Try to include as many 'press' articles as possible which relate to your 'in bloom' work throughout the year within your portfolio. We read with interest the future proposals laid down by Groundwork Greater Nottingham and look forward to seeing them develop over the next few years. It would be useful for the judges if you could take the opportunity to give a short presentation (prior to the tour commencing) outlining what has been happening in Blidworth over the last 12 months, particularly anything new.

A: 67 B: 34 C: 35 Total: 136

SMALL TOWN**Bracebridge Heath**Judged on 17th July**Silver Award 129 points**

Judges: Jeff Bates & Richard Stephen

Judges Award: The Growing for Gold theme

Great progress has been made since your first entry into East Midlands in Bloom last year, with developments everywhere; a splendid community spirit prevails and an engaging approach to what you are doing. The tour of Bracebridge Heath was most enjoyable, and the sense of fun that overarches everything that you do was wonderful.

Areas of Achievement

Section A

Congratulations on getting your 3 three tier floral towers. They have made such a difference to London Road. Minster Court was a wonderful surprise for the judges, with beautifully landscaped grounds. Well done to the residents and the management of the court, it is an excellent facility. A special mention must go to John and his magical 'Kitchen' garden tucked away in a little corner of the grounds. The Homestead also provided excellent planted containers and hanging basket display. The Bull also had a number of good hanging baskets. The 21st Lincolnshire Scouts have worked tirelessly this year, carrying out clean ups, planting tubs and troughs (St Johns Church), making huge Sun Flowers and watering - Well done! There were a number of attractive residential gardens along the route and the cricket playing field in the grounds of the NHS Cross O'Cliff Court were being well maintained

Section B

The woodland walk located to the rear of Minster Court is very good with its bird boxes, bulbs and wildflower beds. This little gem has enormous potential as an asset to the town in the future. The town tour was generally free of litter and detritus. The team and volunteers have carried out regular 'clean ups' throughout the year which have made a big difference to certain locations. It was noted again that you source local materials where possible and that you use peat-free and organic compost in your containers. It was very inventive the way you dealt with 2 vacant premises along the route – promoting your theme 'Growing for Gold' and the 'Bloom' concept. The judges were impressed with 'breadth' of your recycling programme – old tyres to syrup tins.

Section C

The 'in bloom' group have developed a wonderful Community Spirit across the town, trying to involve and communicate with as many people as possible via posters, banners, newsletters and the village website. Excellent work from the Ninja Knitters, transforming an old Bus Shelter for the day. Good support from Mundys Estate Agents, Pennells Garden Centre, Anglian Water, Tyres from the local MOT garage, funds from the Gardening Club and the Big Society Councillors Fund. Good to see that the local cub scout group have been involved supporting the town's entry. Congratulations to Bracebridge Heath's Allotment Association for becoming Co-Op Community Champions. Well done.!

Areas for Development

Section A

It would be good if you could include a visit to a school which encourages their children to grow plants or creates 'art' work in support of the 'bloom'. Try to encourage and engage with more of the local businesses to participate in supporting your efforts. I understand the judges saw the asylum's former cemetery last year. It might be an idea, if possible, to include it again in next year's tour. The judges are always interested in visiting local allotments and speaking to anybody who happens to be working on them at the time of the tour. Keep trying to increase the number of floral displays around the town.

Section B

There was some evidence of weeds in gutters and adjacent walls / fences along walkways which could be quickly dealt with prior to the tour taking place. There is an opportunity to promote the town's heritage through its buildings, art works and planting schemes. Try to provide more evidence and examples of how recycling takes place throughout the town and how it is used to benefit the residents e.g. water harvesting.

Section C

We are looking forward to seeing the development of the planned woodland walks. Keep pressing for more support from the local businesses. It would be useful for the judges if you could take the opportunity to give a short presentation (prior to the tour commencing) outlining what has been happening in Bracebridge Heath over the last 12 months, particularly anything new. Try to include as many 'press' articles as possible which relate to your 'in bloom' work throughout the year within your portfolio.(up to 15 double sided pages). Identifying future projects would be helpful to the judge in assessing Bracebridge Heaths development

A: 60 B: 33 C: 36 Total: 129

SMALL TOWN**Alford****Silver Award 126 points**Judged on 17th July

Judges: Jeff Bates & Richard Stephen

Judges Award: The Half Moon Restaurant and Tea Rooms

The historic Lincolnshire Town was, despite heavy traffic on the main road, most welcoming and attractive, with the new hard landscaping in the town having provided excellent pedestrian surfacing. Floral colour abounds, and this is complimented by lovely green spaces, with the Old Manor House once again splendid. Well done on the progress that you have made since your first entry last year.

Areas of Achievement

Section A

The Old Manor House was a complete delight again this year. Wonderful floral displays, kitchen garden area, orchard with Lincolnshire apples and even chickens. The grounds around the front of the manor were beautifully maintained and obviously being enjoyed by residents and visitors alike. Excellent hanging baskets and troughs were on display around the town particularly Choice properties, J. B. Flower Designs, The White Hart, Haircraft, The Anchor and the Half Moon just to mention a few. We were shown a delightful secret garden at the NFU offices. The Market Place car park, Corn Exchange, areas around the Town Pump with its floral towers and the beautiful Bus Shelter were all impressive with good hanging baskets and tubs. The Memorial Recreation Ground was looking good with good play equipment, shrub borders and well maintained grass areas. The route took us past some lovely residential gardens in particular Hanby Hall. St Wilfrid's Church and its grounds were well maintained.

Section B

The Five Sail Windmill was an unexpected pleasure, so significant in the landscape and important to Alford's heritage. The wildflower area at the Old Manor was growing well and the interpretation of the building and its facilities were very good. The Town Pump and stocks supported with floral displays were also good. The work around the new Bus Shelter was particularly good.

Section C

It was great to see that there was an increase in the number of businesses involved in making Alford an attractive place to visit and shop. The 'Bloom' culture is driven by the Alford and District Horticultural Society which continues to thrive. Since last year there is evidence to suggest that the community are starting to get behind the 'bloom' campaign. It was good to see that you had received some press coverage relating to your efforts

Areas for Development

Section A

It would be good if you could include a visit to a school which encourages their children to grow plants or creates 'art' work in support of the 'bloom'. Try to encourage and engage with even more of the local businesses to participate in supporting your efforts. Consider involving / visiting the Crematorium as part of the judge's route next year. It would be a major achievement if you could get the Windmill Family & Commercial Hotel to participate next year. The judges are always interested in visiting local allotments and speaking to anybody who happens to be working on them at the time of the tour.

Section B

There is an opportunity to promote the town's heritage through its buildings, art works and planting schemes. Try to provide more evidence and examples of how recycling takes place throughout the town and how it is used to benefit the residents e.g. water harvesting. In some areas the park and street furniture (benches and litter bins) were in need of attention (paint work, graffiti). The old notice board at the park needs attention and would benefit visitors if it could be repositioned nearer the gate. There is an opportunity to increase the amount of wildflower displays around the town to support wildlife

Section C

It would be useful for the judges if you could take the opportunity to give a short presentation (prior to the tour commencing) outlining what has been happening in Alford over the last 12 months, particularly anything new. Try to include as many 'press' articles as possible which relate to your 'in bloom' work throughout the year within your portfolio (up to 15 double sided pages). Identifying future projects would be helpful to the judge in assessing Alford's development

A: 74 B: 30 C: 22 Total: 126

SMALL TOWN**Winterton in Bloom****Silver Award 122 points**

Judged on 11th July

Judges: Jeff Bates & Richard Stephen

Judges Award: Business Support for Winterton in Bloom

This first time entrant has made a remarkable start into the East Midlands in Bloom campaign, having energised considerable numbers of local volunteers and supporters across a range of the community. A lovely afternoon enabled the efforts of all to be shown off very well, with attractive floral features, residential gardens and the developments at the school to the fore. There are also many plans for the future of what we are certain will become a strong community-based entry in the coming years.

Areas of Achievement

Section A

A series of very colourful hanging baskets, and some large containers, feature prominently in the central conservation area of the town, adding a very welcome splash of seasonal colour. On small open spaces (such as Park Lane / West St junction, and Park Lane / King St corner) flower beds and planting have been introduced, with the Brownies having taken responsibility for one bed, and another area including tomato plants.

The involvement of the Funeral Directors, George Hogg Pub and Tesco Express is good to see.

Many attractive residential gardens were seen, with the garden at 1 Hart Lane being splendid (some exotic container planting evident), brilliant bedding at Central House and the run of colour around the Almshouses very cheerful. Green spaces were well-maintained, with verges tidily mown and the churchyard and cemetery clearly cared for. The grounds of the Junior School were much improved by recent installation of trees and raised beds, with flowers, climbers and vegetables growing well.

Section B

The tour was very clean, with very few instances of litter, no dog fouling or graffiti evident. Most of the street furniture was in good condition, with signposts having been cleaned or re-painted. Plans for rainwater harvesting have been introduced, and most of the containers are reservoir-based.

There is a dramatic Millennium mural in Market Square! Also an interesting wall plaque on the twinning with Saffre.

Section C

Well done on getting so much support so quickly! Setting up a strong and diverse base with the committee members is excellent, with all sections of the community represented. Your publicity, including press interest and your website, is worthy of an experienced entrant, and is clearly reaping benefits already.

The Junior School has already received a positive mention; the visit, led by Lindsay Lacey-Hatton, showed that much has begun and much more will follow over the coming years.

A well-considered tour, led by Angela Grounds and Lisa Newstead, showed off the many things that are already happening as part of the Bloom initiative, as did the thoughtful and organised presentation from Lisa at the start. Levels of business sponsorship are very good indeed for a new Bloom entrant, with so many individually sponsored containers and financially supported baskets. Well done on getting the 'sponsors board' in place, and in such a prominent location

Areas for Development

Section A

Continue to strengthen your engagement with the business community to increase the numbers who display colour on their frontages. Some have hanging basket brackets present but nothing on them. Try to include the allotments on the route next year.

Try to increase children participation and involvement with future planting schemes at the Junior School.

We hope you are able to succeed in re-structuring the West Street Park, where there is scope to increase the amenity value with the introduction of some seasonal colour (e.g. ribbons of annual 'wildflowers') and perhaps perennial borders, if the skateboard park can be relocated. The value of the site to family use (including younger children) will be much improved if this can be achieved

Section B

This is an area of the criteria that you have yet to focus on, and there are some fairly straightforward things that can be done to improve here, for example:

On some of the trees in the park and in particular in the churchyard and cemetery, begin a phased introduction of bird boxes; it will be useful to engage a school or other youth group in this, and perhaps also to contact the Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust to see if they are able to advise and assist.

Find out about Simons Wood Natural Reserve; if interest is there, engage with the Woodland Trust to see if it can become part of the judging route.

See if some of the seats in West Street Park would benefit from a scrub; is there a Community Payback group in the area looking for some work?

At the Cemetery, look into the possibility of waste separation for organic (e.g.flowers) and non-organic materials (e.g. wrappings) to reduce the environmental impact. In due course, a new sign board will be useful here too

Consider developing the town's heritage information around the town and in the portfolio.

Section C

Make contact with the Co-Op to see if they will make Winterton in Bloom one of their Community Champions.

See if the Bowls Club would be worth inclusion on the tour route.

Look to increase the written content in your portfolio, and minimise the use of photographs of the Town in summertime. Try to provide photographic evidence of all year round community activity which supports the 'Bloom'

A: 63 B: 24 C: 35 Total: 122

TOWN

Immingham in Bloom **Gold Award and Category Winner, 181 points**

Judged on 9th July

Judges: Sharon Sutton and Peter Fields

Judges Award: For the consistent quality of special bloom features throughout the entry

Immingham consistently pulls it out of the bag each year and this year was no exception, the whole entry has a holistic approach to the bloom, even behind the scenes is well organised and executed to the finest detail, well done and keep up the good work

Areas of Achievement

Section A

The Boat Bed was colourful and well positioned on the corner giving maximum effect. Again, the Railway Wagon feature at the Civic Centre is maturing very well; it looks very natural in its setting.

Despite the disruption around the Civic Centre the area was well maintained and colourful

Section B

Very clean and tidy, street furniture was immaculate.

Nature conservation is high on the agenda including planting for pollinating and the work on the ponds.

Plenty of interpretation, anyone could just turn up and know what the features meant and why they were there

Section C

What can be said but well done!

Areas for Development

Section A

Some dead trees in verges need to be dealt with. A very good entry

Section B

As suggested last year an Ecological Survey is required at Homestead Park.

A few planters are still left needing refurbishment especially at the back of the Civic Centre, rotting wood panels etc

Section C

Nothing to say except the 15 minute presentation would be improved by a polish

A: 91 B: 42 C: 48 Total: 181

TOWN

Bourne

Silver Gilt Award 160 points

Judged on 8th July

Judges: Sharon Sutton & Peter Fields

Judges Award: The Willoughby Special School for the indoor sensory garden

Bourne have been entering In Bloom for a number of years, and have been making steady progress, the whole town looks lovely and a pleasure to visit, they listen to the judges feedback and it shows for the benefit of residents and visitors to the town

Areas of Achievement

Section A

Initiative to offer reduced price baskets has encouraged more businesses to participate, hopefully local businesses will continue with their support.

The high standard of maintenance at the cemetery and allotments was impressive. Well Head Park was also very well maintained. Bourne is improving every year.

Section B

For a town of this size it has a wealth of conservation initiatives.

People of Bourne take obvious pride in their environment which is very clean and well maintained with no evidence of graffiti.

Allotments, church yard and cemetery were in excellent order and a pleasure to visit. The indoor garden, a virtual reality room, at the Willoughby School was truly exceptional allowing the most profoundly disabled children to interact with the projected surroundings

Section C

Bourne is consistently building on each successful year.

The Community is obviously pulling in the same direction.

Good links with local press and media plus close connections with schools and community groups.

Very good this year

Areas for Development

Section A

Most aspects of section A have improved which is reflected in the marks awarded.

We hope that they can continue business participation and sponsorship, and their eye for detail and improvement will ensure this section continues to improve

Section B

There is a general lack of information about the heritage and conservation attractions, although we realise that this shortcoming is being addressed, such as that proposed at Elsea Meadows with interpretation and information boards being developed

Section C

The 15 minute presentation could be used to better effect by including a simple visual presentation to demonstrate the year round involvement in addition to the list in the portfolio.

Generally this section is very good

A: 81 B: 37 C: 42 Total: 160

TOWN

Southwell

Silver Award 149 points

Judged on 10th July

Judges: Sharon Sutton & Peter Fields

Judges Award: The Southwell Flood Forum - for taking on such a complex Project

Southwell is a lovely town with many features of which residents can be proud. The work at the Minster to renovate the gardens will be a wonderful resource in the future and become a definite asset to the town's tourist industry. The tour was interesting and informative and Southwell was a pleasure to visit

Areas of Achievement

Section A

The hanging baskets were worthy of note creating impact and colour throughout the town centre.

Bishop's Drive herbaceous border is impressive and well maintained.

Workhouse gardens are well kept and productive.

The Minster surrounds are very well manicured

Section B

The judges were impressed by the Flower Pod's innovations to reduce environmental impact of their activities.

Potwell Dyke wildflower grassland continues to be a conservation asset.

The work on the Dyke by the Flood Forum is a stunning example of the community working together for the benefit of all residents

Section C

The community seems to be pulling together giving this entry a more unified feel.

The general impression is of a well-supported Bloom Group achieving steady improvement with several new projects in the pipeline.

Keep up the good work

Areas for Development

Section A

Restoration of Bishop's Palace garden should, when finished, be a huge visitor attraction and a valuable asset.

The Judges look forward to seeing progress with the planters project around seating, signs and focal areas

Section B

Provision of an information board relating to the Potwell Dyke Grassland, and celebrating the Higher Level Stewardship awarded by Natural England would be an asset to this site.

More information about B2 Resource Management would be helpful in the future

Section C

This entry would benefit from utilising the 15 minutes allocated to Section C4, year round involvement in addition to the portfolio.

Excellent second year effort

A: 72 B: 37 C: 40 Total: 149

TOWN**Syston****Silver Award 142 points**

Judged on 10th July

Judges: Sharon Sutton & Peter Fields

Judges Award: The Watermead Country Park - for dedication and enthusiasm

This community improves each year and that is reflected in the marks given, the enthusiasm of the Bloom Group is tangible and it is obvious they will continue to make improvements.

The judges were impressed with the tour and look forward to visiting Syston for years to come

Areas of Achievement

Section A

The Bowling Green area is excellent, being well manicured with notable hanging baskets adorning the building.

Allotment orchard planting is an asset to community a really good project.

The Parks were generally well groomed and clean with town centre baskets and planters being especially good, and well augmented by the Queen Victoria pub

Section B

Watermead Country Park impressed the judges very much. Very knowledgeable and enthusiastic Ranger a mine of facts and information.

Street furniture was generally well maintained, an improvement over last year.

General recycling was very good.

The Heritage Trail booklet is an excellent addition

Section C

The group, having collected themselves, have improved in most areas, pulling the community together.

Comprehensive portfolio of events shows year round involvement, this group is becoming well supported, keep up the good work

Areas for Development

Section A

Some areas of bedding could have been fuller, possibly being planted sooner. Generally this section shows an improvement and the judges expect this upward trend to continue

Section B

Whilst some improvement in general street furniture cleanliness was noted, street sweeping on some side streets such as Brookside would benefit from a mechanical sweep.

Most areas were very good; attention to noticeboard cleanliness needs to be improved such as at Park Square

Section C

Keep up the good work a big improvement well done

A: 71 B: 35 C: 36 Total: 142

TOWN

Waltham Parish Council

Bronze Award 100 points

Judged on 9th July

Judges: Sharon Sutton & Peter Fields

Judges Award: The Bowlers - for the brilliant work at the green

As a first time entry for Waltham they have not let themselves down, the town was clean and tidy with special features throughout, there is community involvement with clean up days and planting out, this will build as time goes by and the judges look forward to seeing them grow in the future.

Areas of Achievement

Section A

The Bowling Green in the centre of Waltham was a green gem, the club members should be commended for their achievement.

Verges and open spaces were well maintained.

The small pockets of planting gave a welcome to visitors and residents

Section B

An obviously huge effort has been made at key focal points around the village, paving the way for continued improvement.

Waltham was well presented being clean and tidy with no visible litter, no doubt due to the village tidy up day, almost two weeks previously which shows people have taken a pride in their town

Section C

An excellent turnout to the Village Tidy Up showed resident commitment to make improvements.

Engaging with community groups such as Brownies is a good start and is a good example to other groups who may want to participate in the area.

Areas for Development

Section A

Given that this is Waltham's first entry from a standing start they have made a good effort.

We hope they continue to build on their volunteer and sponsor base engaging with local businesses and organisations to continue improving year on year

Section B

As Waltham develops, their In Bloom strategy could include conservation and biodiversity.

An eye for the condition of signs and street furniture and to provide some information about resource management to the general public and within the portfolio would help the marks, the town will have this information and are no doubt doing these things, Waltham needs to stop hiding their light and show off a bit on judging day, but this will come with experience

Section C

A good effort for a first entry which will improve with increased participation and sponsorship

A: 57 B: 23 C: 20 Total: 100

LARGE TOWN

 **Market Harborough in Bloom** **Gold Award & Category Winner, 178 points**
 **East Midlands in Bloom Award for Best Public Park – Welland Park**

Judged on 8th July

Judges: Diane Moore and Ian Cooke

Judges award - the pupils, staff and volunteers at the C of E School

The judges were treated to an excellent tour, showcasing many areas of this historic town. Throughout the visit it was obvious that there is a strong, keen group of volunteers that are achieving an enormous amount of practical work and liaising productively with many sectors of the community, particularly the local authority. From the sparkling Welland park through to magical glades of the arboretum, it was a fascinating morning

Areas of Achievement

Section A

The close co-operation between the volunteers, the town council and local businesses is clearly instrumental in many of the achievements and impressed the judges. The restored rose garden with its new timberwork is a great improvement and in direct response to the judges' comments 2013. The extensive floral displays at the Three Swans are once again appreciated. The use of the greenhouses and nursery space to produce bedding plants, shrubs and grafted fruit trees is a great initiative

Section B

The ongoing restoration of the Welland River is an impressive project and will no doubt increase the wildlife value of this area. Recently installed bird boxes in the arboretum are a valuable addition. The various different wildlife habitats at the school are a great teaching resource

Section C

The organisation of the volunteers with their own work base and many activities is highly commended. The co-ordination of work in seven schools is impressive. Working with many social groups such as the café staff and the volunteers with learning difficulties is admirable work. The portfolio and its collection of photos and press cuttings is great evidence of year round activities. The judges also liked the various ways in which the Bloom campaign was promoted, the bee posters in shops, the big display board on the bus stop and corporate T shirts and high-vis jackets

Areas for Development

Section A

The bedding in Welland Park is of excellent quality It is suggested that consideration is given to the careful design of the many beds using a theme or colour schemes for yet further enhancement. The judges suggest that a front garden competition and an allotment competition might improve the standards of these aspects of Bloom

Section B

The judges wonder if there are any areas that could be developed as a proper wildlife meadow? The town seems to have very little landscape art or sculpture and it is suggested that this could be explored, possibly in conjunction with local schools or colleges. Encourage the council to continue with the replacement of the poor litter bins in the park. Consider showing visible evidence of recycling, quite simply by means of a drive-by to a compost facility or recycling area

Section C

The judges would suggest that Bloom should develop its own website. Consideration should be given to initiating new neighbourhood groups to improve front gardens and create new areas of interest. Whilst the tour is undoubtedly inclusive and successful, the team should consider ways to add fresh elements illustrating new initiatives each year

A: 89 B: 44 C: 45 Total: 178

LARGE TOWN**Belper**

Judged on 14th July

Judges Award: the WW1 Poppies

Gold Award 177 points

Judges: Diane Moore and Ian Cooke

The judges were welcomed to this delightful entry not only by a warm sunny morning but by a choir singing the town song, the result of a competition which resulted in this innovative way of introducing key events. A second welcome followed from the town crier in the town square. Bearing in mind the town was just recovering from a weekend event that attracted thousands of visitors, the town was sparkly clean and tidy. A well co-ordinated tour followed with many highlights, all carefully orchestrated and culminating at the lovely River Gardens

Areas of Achievement

Section A

The judges enjoyed both the river gardens and the memorial gardens for their traditional horticulture and high standard of maintenance. Little touches such as the organ grinder by the bandstand gave added interest.

We were particularly impressed by the work of the team gardening at Belper station.

The 165 hanging baskets maintained by the Bloom volunteers with their own equipment are an impressive undertaking.

Section B

The judges were impressed by the wildlife potential of Belper Parks, the Wyver Lane Nature Reserve and the Cemetery.

The recycling of a red telephone box for information is a great initiative. Heritage in Belper seems to be well documented and accessible.

The WW1 poppy project is an impressive reminder of the importance of this anniversary.

It was good to see so many examples of well dressing from a wide cross-section of the community.

The painting of the street furniture by volunteers in co-operation with the town council is great.

The time capsule is an excellent idea.

Section C

The judges were impressed by the strong volunteer base with its clear leadership team.

The initial presentation by PowerPoint was clear and full of interest as is the portfolio.

There is an impressive program of year-round events.

The team should also be commended for a well structured tour which was carefully timed.

The Bloom initiative seems to be well funded with a generous series of donations and sponsorship from local businesses

Areas for Development

Section A

The car park near the station was in need of sweeping and attention to some broken bollards. Whilst the hanging baskets were impressive, the team might consider if these could be produced 'in house', working in conjunction with the team at the Whitemoor Centre, utilising their new tunnels and producing an income for the centre.

Beaurepaire Garden is an interesting visit but the group may like to consider supporting the owner who currently maintains this area on his own to improve the horticultural expertise.

The standard of grass verges in some areas needs attention, it is recognised that the County Council have reduced their budgets which makes it difficult for local groups to tackle these issues.

Section B

The judges would like to see more visual examples of recycling such a drive-by of a recycling or composting facility.

Some more evidence of art in the landscape would be good too

Section C

Could the group fit in a visit to a school garden on the tour?

Could the Bloom consider encouraging the formation of 'It's your Neighbourhood' group?

Although not essential the judges would also like to encourage Belper to enter some of the EMIB 'Special' competitions such as the Best Front Gardens.

A: 88 B: 44 C: 45 Total: 177

LARGE TOWN

Long Eaton

Gold Award 172 points

Judged on 10th July

Judges: Diane Moore and Ian Cooke

Judges Award: the rEvide project utilising empty shops

The judges enjoyed a well-structured tour to this busy town on a sunny morning. The extensive West Park provides a huge range of activities as well as some attractive horticultural features. It was also good to see the allotments where traditional vegetable production sits alongside a wildlife area. The tour also included visits to the town centre with new hanging baskets and the stunning Library Gardens.

Areas of Achievement

Section A

The judges were particularly impressed by the stunningly vibrant planting around the library, utilising seasonal bedding and sustainable planting in a bold, colourful scheme. The colour scheme and quality of plants in the barrier boxes near the town hall was excellent. It was also good to see traditional skills being maintained with the carpet bedding commemorating WW1 by means of a bold red poppy. The Planet Garden in West Park is an interesting project, responding to ideas from the community and realising this using sustainable planting. It was good to see the allotments and hear of various initiatives to upgrade the facilities in the site

Section B

The wildlife area in the allotments is a good resource and valuable contrast to the cultivated areas. The judges also liked the recycled window used as a notice board! The use of recycled water from the splashpad for irrigation is excellent. The use of totally non-peat composts is commendable and the results in terms of plant growth and quality are impressive

Section C

The judges were pleased to see not only the clear responses to last year's judge's recommendation but precise targets for future years. The interaction with various schools and projects involving young people is commendable. The overall community involvement in Long Eaton is impressive and the judges would like to highlight the work of the In Bloom Steering Group as they have made a big impact on this year's entry

Areas for Development

Section A

There are three entry points into Long Eaton and the proposed developments at the station are welcomed and if completed would enhance the visitor perception of the town. The judges are looking forward to seeing the continued improvements at West Park including the ongoing removal of the poplar trees and replanting schemes. The judges would also like to see low level planting through the town centre to complement the new hanging basket trees to round off the overall scheme

Section B

The judges felt that there is a lot of potential within the local heritage such as the lace industry and links to the canal and that these should be explored further. The judges would like to see further examples of art in the landscape particularly at key sites such as West Park and the Train Station. The standard of maintenance of the street furniture was high but not consistent across the town and there is potentially a quick win here particularly outside the Civic Centre

Section C

The various competitions are a great way to involve the community but the judges would like to see additional ways of linking these to East Midlands in Bloom. The judges would like to see further involvement from the community in developing the tour and the key sites visited. The portfolio shows a wide range of evidence but would benefit from having further information on the all year round activity

A: 88 B: 41 C: 43 Total: 172

LARGE TOWN

Ilkeston

Gold Award 171 points

Judged on 16th July

Judges: Diane Moore and Ian Cooke

Judges Award: Children and staff at Chaucer School

The Ilkeston tour started in the tranquil gardens of the General Havelock and moved through a series of well-chosen stopping points, illustrating the various key elements of the Bloom initiative. The judges appreciated that whilst the tour was unhurried; we did get the opportunity to see a wider range of facilities from the wild areas of Straw's Bridge, through to the clipped formality of Victoria Park. Altogether, a well-planned tour demonstrating a community working hard to improve many areas of the environment

Areas of Achievement

Section A

The judges were impressed by the colourful floral displays around White Lion Square and the contrasting sustainable planting in the well-designed garden of the General Havelock pub. The new basket trees and planters in Market Square helped to soften the large expanse of hard landscaping which was to be highly commended. The small front garden near Victoria Park is a lovely oasis of colour and the formal bedding and herbaceous border in Victoria Park are great traditional park features and highly appropriate. The inclusive play area, improved tennis courts at Rutland Sports Park and the adjoining Clarksfield allotments are great examples of how to maintain publicly accessible facilities

Section B

The judges were impressed with the general standard of cleanliness and corporate image presented by means of the uniform colour in use and high quality street furniture. It was good to see on-site composting at Victoria Park and the completion of the ecology surveys. The judges acknowledged the huge wildlife and amenity potential of Straw's Bridge and are looking forward to another visit in the future.

Section C

The judges appreciated the new route and responses to last year's suggestions. We were pleased to hear how Bloom judging marks were integrated into local management strategies and targets. It was great to hear of the strong links with local schools and the many Friends groups and supporting organisations, especially the amazing achievements of Chaucer Junior School. The portfolio was clear and concise, backed up by a succinct introduction. The achievement of Lottery funding for Victoria Park is a great step towards the restoration of this park

Areas for Development

Section A

The judges would like to see further examples of quality front gardens and more commercial premises. The judges are excited to hear about the development projects at Victoria Park and the Erewash Museum and look forward to seeing them come into reality over the next few years.

Section B

The judges would like to see more examples of public art in the landscape particularly at Victoria Park and also feel that more could be made of the general heritage of the town especially with the ongoing development of the Erewash Museum. The judges would also like to see more of Straws Bridge to explore what the site has to offer and would like the team to explore its potential as a Local Nature Reserve

Section C

The judges would like to encourage feedback from business sponsors along the route and hear how they value being involved to further promote East Midlands in Bloom. The judges would like to gain a greater understanding of the new tree warden's scheme and potentially meet them on a future visit. The team could consider approaching businesses or organisations specifically to sponsor the new hanging baskets or a new piece of art work within the landscape

A: 88 B: 40 C: 43 Total: 171

LARGE TOWN**Spalding****Gold Award 170 points**

Judged on 18th July

Judges: Diane Moore and Ian Cooke

Judges Award: The allotment and garden at the Priory School

On a very hot afternoon at the end of the second week, the judges visited Spalding. Starting at the impressive Spring fields Gardens and Shopping Centre, we moved on to visit two schools. We walked through the town visiting many areas adorned with colourful hanging baskets as well as the gardens of Ayscoughfee Hall. A welcome refreshment break was taken in the colourful garden of the Punchbowl

Areas of Achievement

Section A

The judges were impressed by Springfield Gardens and the adjoining Springfields Shopping Centre with its many well grown hanging baskets.

The impressive quantity of colourful hanging baskets throughout the town gave considerable impact.

The judges enjoyed the traditional gardens at Ayscoughfee Hall. The hanging baskets at the station were well grown in a different colour theme. The floral on the barge, although ephemeral were a nice touch for judging day. It was good to see the work being done at the two schools particularly Priory School. We enjoyed the colourful and fun gardens at the Punchbowl

Section B

The mosaic by the public conveniences is a valuable contribution to public art.

The judges were impressed by the way the Priory School had integrated small animals together with vegetable production and composting.

The judges liked the idea of the recycling lottery – a great incentive.

It was good to see wildlife areas at the schools starting children young in wildlife conservation issues.

Section C

The sponsorship of so many hanging baskets by the business community is impressive.

The judges noted that both the press and local radio are supportive of the Bloom initiative.

There was a willing team constructing the sensory garden, which adds to the community participation.

It was good to see the additional involvement from both the front garden and pub special entries.

Areas for Development

Section A

The group may like consider more sustainable planting maybe shrubs and herbaceous planting where there are opportunities.

The group may like to consider taking the judges to see allotments, a retirement home and churches or cemeteries.

The judges also observed an 'empty' traffic island that could become a feature if possible

Section B

The group may like to consider taking the judges to other conservation area if available such as woodlands, ponds and meadows.

There was some inconsistency to litter collection and weed control in some areas.

The planters and benches in Hall Place could do with some TLC.

The group may like to consider interpretation panels and publicly available leaflets to promote their local heritage.

Section C

The judges would like to see more evidence of year round activities associated with Bloom in the portfolio.

The judges would like to see a clearer presentation on funding and sponsorship

A: 89 B: 39 C: 42 Total: 170

LARGE TOWN

Louth in Bloom

Silver Gilt Award 165 points

Judged on 17th July

Judges: Diane Moore and Ian Cooke

Judges Award – Friends and Volunteers at the cemetery

Once again the tour of Louth included a number of innovative ideas. Not only were the knitted hanging baskets on display again but these were accompanied by many knitted butterflies throughout the town. Judges were given another very balanced tour which included elements of their heritage, community work and the development of new projects such as the Horse Steps area. Well done Louth

Areas of Achievement

Section A

A good selection of hanging baskets and troughs were on display throughout the tour. The large troughs in the Market Place were very good. The judges particularly enjoyed the very colourful Bridge House front garden. St. Mary's Church Cemetery / open space was well maintained and fit for purpose. It was good to see the tradition of Well Dressing being adopted in this area. Spout Yard Gardens adjacent to the river Ludd, with variety of plantings was a credit to the town

Section B

Throughout the tour there are strong heritage links which include Spouts Yard, Cattle Market, Enginegate Walk, Kiln Lane etc. The series of heritage boards were impressive as was the work done by the volunteer museum with its 19C panorama. The various examples of art in the landscape were very good, particularly the notice board for the Coastal Grazing Project. The meadows area within St. Mary's cemetery has great potential. Generally the street furniture was looking good

Section C

Throughout Louth there is extremely good community awareness of the campaign and the general objectives of the 'in bloom' group. The volunteer base appears strong and there seems to be a 'united' front across all age groups to improve Louth's environment. The various linked teams of volunteers working in the cemetery was most impressive. There is excellent support from the Local Press for the 'bloom' campaign and all the work the volunteers do. There was some good support from local businesses as well as from Louth Town Council.

Areas for Development

Section A

Maintenance of some of the grass verges and open space areas could be improved. Try to encourage more businesses, particularly in the town centre area, to be involved in the 'bloom' campaign by having their own hanging baskets on display. The 'in bloom' entry could be enhanced further if judges could see more residential front gardens. It was felt that though The Mount Pleasant initiative was a good idea, it could be better

Section B

Throughout Louth there is extremely good community awareness of the campaign and the general objectives of the 'in bloom' group. The volunteer base appears strong and there seems to be a 'united' front across all age groups to improve Louth's environment. The various linked teams of volunteers working in the cemetery was most impressive. There is excellent support from the Local Press for the 'bloom' campaign and all the work the volunteers do. There was some good support from local businesses as well as from Louth Town Council

Section C

It may be worth considering bringing forward the presentation so that judges have an insight as to the work carried out by the 'in bloom' group before the tour commences. The portfolio itself was very good again. Keep trying to get more local businesses on board through sponsorship or by 'doing' their own thing, the Market Place and adjoining streets would benefit from having more colour

A: 83 B: 41 C: 41 Total: 165

LARGE TOWN

Melton in Bloom

Silver Gilt Award 165 points

Judged on 7th July

Judges: Diane Moore and Ian Cooke

Judges Award: The gardening team at the Mencap Day Centre

This was a well-planned and carefully timed tour, which showcased many of the highlights of the town and gave the judges the opportunity to meet key people involved in the Bloom initiative. Floral displays throughout the town followed the gold theme with some well-co-ordinated plant associations. Throughout the tour it was obvious that a wide cross-section of the community was involved and their keenness was demonstrated in many active projects. A well prepared and illustrated portfolio presented other seasonal activities and areas we were not able to visit

Areas of Achievement

Section A

The new planting in the Wilton road raised bed is a promising scheme with sustainable planting that will, with maturity, give interest throughout the year. It was good to meet the apprentices who had designed this scheme and to see their enthusiasm and ongoing care for the plants. The plans for the proposed poppy wall art on the opposite side of the street are a good way of dealing with this blank wall in a key location. The sensory garden in the country park and entry beds in the memorial gardens were attractive oases of horticultural interest, and the superb Heritage Garden is a great achievement

Section B

The greenhouse made from recycled bottles is an innovative way of creating a protected environment. It was also good to see evidence of the unusual suspended bottle planters at the special needs school. The recruitment of Daisy, the litter dog is surely a unique way of promoting responsibility for litter and particularly to children. Good use of bird and owl boxes in various places. The country park is well-managed with a variety of habitats.

Section C

It was good to see a very wide involvement from many sectors of the community spanning ages and abilities. Commendation must be given for the innovative use of many volunteers such as the involvement of the fire service for installing the bird boxes. The programme of year-round activities is commendable, as also is the regular participation of the local press. This has no doubt helped with the very positive response from the town.

Areas for Development

Section A

Despite many areas of colour and interest the judges felt a 'Wow' effect could be achieved by increasing the floral impact in the Market Place. The morning and evening beds in the memorial gardens, although planted with a good mix of perennials could be improved by adding more floral colour. Consider including sight of allotments and more business or commercial premises in addition to retail on future tours

Section B

The judges wonder if there is potential for additional areas of wildflower meadow in some of the close mown areas such as the park by the King's Highway. Consider showing more evidence of recycling such as a visit to a composting facility or simply pointing out of recycling stations. Consideration should be given to trialling some reduced peat composts for planters and baskets. Some more detailed interpretation for the superb Heritage Garden would be valuable

Section C

The judges would suggest that gaining greater financial support from a range of businesses would give greater security for the future. This strong active group should also consider initiating some 'It's your Neighbourhood' groups which they could mentor, giving further continuity for the future. We were fascinated to hear of the local military animal unit and wonder if some involvement would be possible for future tours

A: 83 B: 40 C: 42 Total: 165

LARGE TOWN

Newark

Silver Gilt Award 162 points

Judged on 11th July

Judges: Diane Moore and Ian Cooke

Judges Award: the Special Needs Allotment

The judges were given a warm welcome on a dry and sunny day for the tour. Throughout the visit the judges were shown the excellent work carried out by the 'Friends' groups and the contributions made by the many local businesses. The varied tour included strong historical elements alongside the many examples of partnership working. A good overall entry. Well done Newark

Areas of Achievement

Section A

The floral displays in and around the Market Place were stunning, well grown, vibrant and colourful. Those created by Jane Young particularly caught the judges eye. The bedding plants on display in the Castle grounds and at the Sconce were also very good. Once again the 'Wharf' area contributed significantly (with its planted sail boat) to the overall entry. Special mention for the special needs allotment and in particular the beautiful sculptures that were on display. We were impressed by the sensitive planting around the Polish War Graves and the floral displays along the main drive. Parks and open spaces were being generally well maintained

Section B

The tour around the Hawton Holt wildlife area with its many different and diverse habitats was very impressive. Not only is the Sconce an important historical feature but it also exhibited some fine areas of meadowland. Newark is fortunate to have retained its many heritage features throughout the town. The series of 9 heritage trails are excellent educational and promotional ways of introducing residents and tourists to the many delights Newark has to offer. It was good to see various examples of recycling and particularly the innovative re-use of a cycle locker into a tool store

Section C

It was wonderful to see the Holy Trinity School children showing so much enthusiasm for the vegetables and flowers they had been growing and the wildlife areas they were nurturing. Again the 'Friends' and support groups throughout have done sterling work. Partnership working with local businesses seems to be on the increase and the 'wharf' area with the Castle Barge seems to get better every year. The community café in The Sconce park is an excellent project as are the many successes of the 'guerrilla gardeners'

Areas for Development

Section A

In some areas, along the route, the grass verges were of varying quality and would benefit from an improved care and maintenance regime. The treatment / removal of Lime tree suckers would significantly enhance the entry. Where possible consider including visits to a residential home or perhaps church grounds as part of the route. Particularly along the judging route, take care to ensure that any permanently planted shrub beds are fully stocked and are of a good density

Section B

Generally speaking throughout the tour, the areas viewed were relatively free of litter however it was felt that in some areas gulleys and hard surfaces were in need of treatment. The quality of the street furniture, including seats, seemed to be inconsistent and in some cases, in need of attention. It was felt that perhaps those shops in prominent locations that were vacant could be put to use to promote the 'Bloom' initiative or the wonderful work carried out by volunteers and 'Friends' groups

Section C

Involving as many businesses as possible can only be good for your 'In bloom' campaign and the town generally. Take advantage of the 'guerrilla gardeners' success to date and see if they can do even more to support your efforts to make Newark even more special as a place to live and visit. If the schools plans to move into the additional land beyond the fence is successful, perhaps the 'bloom' group maybe in a position to support some their future work

A: 84 B: 40 C: 38 Total: 162

LARGE TOWN

Sleaford

Silver Gilt Award 160 points

Judged on 9th July

Judges: Diane Moore and Ian Cooke

Judges Award: Zygote Festival

After a break of a year, Sleaford have made a welcome return to the East Midlands in Bloom campaign. This community based entry took the judges on an interesting tour which included the colourful town centre, riverside walk and its links to Sleaford's heritage. Many local groups get involved at all levels and they are very aware of their local heritage and natural environment. We are delighted to have Sleaford back in the fold

Areas of Achievement

Section A

The tour around the town centre was particularly eye catching with many high quality, extremely colourful hanging baskets and floral troughs on display. Very good contributions were made by the local businesses. The volunteers this year followed the 'Growing for Gold' theme which was particularly relevant to their roman heritage. The residential gardens in Westgate Park and New Street were very good as was the landscaping along Eastgate. Grass verges and open spaces (Boston Road Recreation Ground) were generally being well maintained

Section B

The wide spread use of art and sculpture throughout the town was extremely impressive and in particular the mosaics displayed near the Leisure Centre and the Nettles Open air Arts area. Sleaford's heritage links go back to the Roman times (golden wheat grown by the Romans). More recently are the working Water Mills. The meadow grass areas within the cemetery were most attractive. The Sleaford Navigation Trust is doing excellent work maintaining the river Slea and the riverside walk. The Rauceby Banks Project was particularly interesting. The modern recycling unit is a credit to the town. Street furniture was generally good

Section C

Congratulations for being named Sainsbury's Sleaford shops Charity of the Year. Can only be good for you and the town particularly as Sainsbury staff are going to support the campaign throughout the year. Sleaford in Bloom links with the Local Press (Sleaford Standard regularly reporting) is highly commended. Funding applications have been successful and have supported the 'in bloom' aspirations. Partnership working has been good and has included Sleaford Town Council, Arts NK, Schools and other organisations. Good support from local businesses in the Town Centre has helped to make the town centre look vibrant and appealing

Areas for Development

Section A

If improvements work was undertaken around Sleaford's War Memorial this could become a significant feature of the town. Developing the various 'gateways' into the town would make a difference. Try as much as possible to work with the local authority to ensure that grass cutting regimes along the proposed route coincide with the expected judge's visit. Judges also like to see a good range of permanent planting displays, herbaceous borders and planned tree planting programmes.

Section B

The Nettles is an exciting project but could perhaps be improved/benefit from the introduction of interpretation boards. Some seating within the tour route is in need of attention. It may enhance your route if you decide to include a visit to Lollycocks Meadows. It was felt that the planting display at the cemetery this year could be improved – you may think it is appropriate to go down the road of permanent planting. It is important to try and keep the chosen route to be as clean as possible; unfortunately it was evident that in some areas along the route weeds were growing in gullies

Section C

Try to build relationships with members of other organisations that attract the youth element – Scouts, The TA. Continue to develop links with the business sector and expanding your sponsorship portfolio. Consider developing your own website to help spread the word and also in seeking additional volunteers. Aim to have a number of projects which you would like to achieve – long and short term goals

A: 86 B: 40 C: 34 Total: 160

LARGE TOWN**Boston****Silver Gilt Award 159 points**

Judged on 18th July

Judges: Diane Moore and Ian Cooke

Judges Award: Emma Schofield at Boston West Academy

Despite the only rain shower in two weeks, the judges enjoyed the extensive tour of Boston. Throughout the morning we visited a series of successful achievements made by the many community groups and volunteers in Boston. It is evident that the teams have worked hard to make Boston a better place. The morning ended with a delightful visit to the Boston West Academy and the stunning new Hive Eco Centre where we enjoyed a welcome buffet

Areas of Achievement

Section A

The judges were impressed by the wonderful gardens at Boston West Academy with the growing areas, wild flower meadow, wildlife areas and the new Hive eco centre with its beautiful landscape.

The memorial gardens in the town centre are a stunning sight and the Custom House Quay area with the old buoy and boat filled with maritime plants provides quiet interest.

The town centre is also alive with beautifully grown baskets and barrier boxes displaying a lovely mix of summer plants.

The judges also liked the edible garden and new sustainable landscaping at the Leisure Centre.

Section B

The judges were impressed by the many wildlife habitats at Boston West Academy.

The harvesting and re-use of rainwater at Pescod Square is an impressive exercise.

The general quality of cleanliness, litter freedom and maintenance of street furniture was impressive.

The heritage trail and various interpretation boards offer interesting local information

Section C

The judges were impressed by the various achievements of Bloom in the last year and by the planned future projects.

The achievements of Greenscape at the Leisure Centre is commendable.

The judges met and heard about many groups of volunteers that support and take part in the Bloom initiative.

The Big Boston Clean-up and Big Schools Clean-up involving hundreds of children, are both great community events

The close links between the borough council and the volunteers within Bloom is commended.

Areas for Development

Section A

If possible it would be good to visit the allotments.

It would be good to see more examples of private gardens and also residential establishments such as sheltered housing

Section B

Would it be possible to visit Witham Way Country Park to demonstrate wildlife management? An empty shop was observed and it would be good to see if Bloom could take advantage of this for its own campaign.

It will be good to see the completion of the Assembly Room painting

Section C

A clearer programme of year round activities would help the judges as would a more precise summary of funding and financial sponsorship.

The judges would also be appreciative if a smaller group of organisers led the tour (suggest two) meeting additional people along the way.

A: 79 B: 40 C: 40 Total: 159

LARGE TOWN**Buxton in Bloom****Silver Gilt Award 151 points**Judged on 15th July

Judges: Diane Moore and Ian Cooke

Judges Award: the Serpentine Project

This historic town has been involved in Bloom over many years and after a short break has made a welcomed return. The judges enjoyed a busy tour meeting many people from the enthusiastic children at Buxton Infants School, through to those commemorating WW1 with the new poppy flower bed. The community has got behind this entry and have achieved some amazing things in a short space of time. The judges are looking forward to their visit next year

Areas of Achievement

Section A

The judges loved the informality of the charming Milnthorp Homes garden with all the individuality from the different residents. The Lismore road front garden was a stunning display with a well thought out colour scheme. The themed hanging baskets in the colonnade opposite the Opera House were of excellent quality. The judges also enjoyed the peaceful tranquillity of the garden at St John's Church and the new entrance beds at the allotments. The redevelopment of the former Haddon Hall site was to be highly commended and when fully established the newly landscaped grounds will be a real benefit to the residents

Section B

The judges felt that there was a real sense of heritage in Buxton which was well documented and accessible to the public. The judges particularly liked the tree sculpture in the pavilion gardens and the murals around building sites. The Serpentine Project is at a very early stage but has huge potential in terms of community gardening

Section C

The judges were pleased to hear of the various organisations and friends groups that are linked with the Bloom initiative. The inclusion of two 'It's your Neighbourhood' groups are also commendable. We were pleased to see evidence of strong support from the local press. It was also great to hear that well dressing is still active in the town. Keep up the good work

Areas for Development

Section A

The judges would like the group to consider the use of bolder colours in the hanging baskets within the town centre to maximise the impact on the street scene. The judges would like more time to explore the Pavilion Gardens as this is the jewel in the crown for Buxton and has a lot of potential for further development. Continue to enhance the roundabouts and floral displays as they will lift the visitor perception of Buxton and show case what the community has to offer

Section B

The judges would like to see more of the woodlands at Poole's cavern and also the wildlife corridor. Consider including a recycling facility on the tour or further use of the portfolio to evidence the work completed. The judges also felt that there were some areas where improvements could be made to the street scene and would recommend that the local council are involved at an early stage of route planning

Section C

The judges would like the team, to consider a short introduction to the tour with a look at the portfolio before setting out, just to set the scene for the visit. We would also suggest that greater use could be made of the portfolio to identify the all year round activities that are not seen on the tour. Continue the excellent work within the community and continue to develop all aspects of partnership working and fund raising.

A: 77 B: 38 C: 36 Total: 151

LARGE TOWN**Gainsborough****Silver Award 125 points**Judged on 17th July

Judges: Diane Moore and Ian Cooke

Judges Award: Annual Wildflower Meadow at Plough Business Hub

'Gainsborough in Bloom' has been working hard to meet the challenges of the 'In bloom' competition. While the sun shone, the judges had an enjoyable tour taking in the beautiful Gainsborough Old Hall, the wonderful Marshalls Yard Retail Centre and the delightful annual meadow with its colourful cornfield annuals. An entry that is starting to get results. Well done Gainsborough

Areas of Achievement

Section A

Once again, Gainsborough Old Hall grounds were looking superb with their mixture of formal and informal planting. The Queen Elizabeth School floral display was particularly eye catching. Well done Marshalls Yard for the range of planting on display. The hanging baskets and hay troughs were very good. The quality of the planting throughout the town had generally improved particularly adjacent the garage forecourt

Section B

The Annual Wildflower Meadow at the Plough Business Hub was particularly good and worthy of special mention. Gainsborough has strong heritage links which include Marshalls Yard (also depicted by the Tractor roundabout in the town centre) and the Old Hall with its herbalist garden. The Heritage Interpretation Boards at Marshalls Yard on the rotating blocks are an innovative way of displaying the information

Section C

Good to see some contribution from local businesses other than just Marshalls Yard. The 'Awards for All' grant of £9.3K and further sponsorship from supporting businesses is a great success. The judges will look forward to seeing how the grant has benefitted the town next year. Excellent work by the Aegis Community School and in particular the community groups that are making use of the polythene tunnel.

Areas for Development

Section A

As mentioned last year, Richmond Park has huge potential but it does need improvements to the planting regimes and general density of the planting on display. Whilst grass maintenance has improved throughout, however there is still room for improvement. Try to time the mowing regime to coincide with the anticipated judges visit. Try to include some good residential front gardens on the tour.

Section B

Consider taking the judges to an area with wildlife habitats / environments or show evidence of such a location via the portfolio. The introduction of feeders, bat boxes, bug hotels in specific locations within a park would help to create such an environment. Whilst your work on improving the street scene is going in the right direction, there is room to improve the look of the judging route. eg litter collection, weeds in gutters. Consider making use of any of the vacant properties that are on the judging route – perhaps with big posters promoting the 'Bloom' campaign and in particular how residents and businesses can help

Section C

Give the judges the option as to whether they wish to see the portfolio prior to the tour commencing or not. Where possible try to show your 'in bloom' activities throughout the year within the portfolio, including any relevant press releases. You can never have too many businesses supporting your campaign so continue to try and involve them at whatever level. Continue to develop and expand your relationship with schools, other organisations such as Rotary / WI / Scout groups and other volunteering bodies

A: 65 B: 30 C: 30 Total: 125

LARGE TOWN**Earl Shilton in Bloom****Silver Award 120 points**

 **East Midlands in Bloom Award for the Best Retail / Commercial Premises, sponsored by the Art Department: Chris's Fish and Chip Shop**

Judged on 9th July

Judges: Sharon Sutton & Peter Fields

Judges Award: To Earl Shilton Bloom Group for all the hard work in such a short time.

For Earl Shilton's first year the judges were impressed with the welcome they received and the overwhelming enthusiasm of the group, it was a pleasure to walk around the town centre and to see the efforts made to make previously dull areas bright and colourful. Well done

Areas of Achievement

Section A

Appropriate choice of colour in baskets and containers in view of the 1914-18 commemoration.

Planting around Age UK a credit to the group.

Chris's Chip Shop colourful and well maintained welcoming customers and visitors

Section B

The people of Earl Shilton obviously take pride in their environment keeping it clean and tidy.

Local industrial heritage is well depicted in the town centre.

Imaginative use of recycled items such as pallets and washing machine drums to make planters throughout the town.

Section C

An outstanding community effort for such a young group full of enthusiasm.

We have high hopes for their future efforts.

The judges route showed dedication and commitment of the community and the overwhelming support which should ensure future success.

Well Done for a first effort!

Areas for Development

Section A

Consider planting earlier for better display and longer season.

Consider closer planting of containers, baskets and open ground plantings to give a fuller appearance.

Show the judges a wider range of amenities such as a cemetery, allotments and schools.

Ensure new bedded areas are kept weed free

Section B

Consider showing the judges examples of conservation and biodiversity in future tours such as wild flower meadows and tree planting which are managed constructively with this in mind.

Provide information boards for the public describing the historical and industrial areas of interest and importance

Section C

Hard to mark so young a group, looking forward to future efforts

A: 59 B: 27 C: 34 Total: 120

SMALL CITY

 **Grimsby** **Gold Award and Category Winner, 180 points**

 **Western Power Distribution Best School Garden for Wildlife:** Lisle Marsden Church of England Primary Academy

Judged on 15th July

Judges: Chris Beal and John Simpson

Judges Award: The work by Howard Grove residents for their floral displays down the street

A tour of Grimsby saw some wonderful examples of annual bedding and some extremely well maintained roadside verges. There were some good and original examples of art in the landscape throughout the tour. The working together of the Bloom committee, the local authority and the community enables Grimsby to continue to thrive in this campaign

Areas of Achievement

Section A

The quality and quantity of annual bedding throughout the city.

The grounds of the crematorium were a delight to see.

The on-going projects at Heron Close shrub beds continues to thrive.

Section B

The recycling service provided by the Council and its partners is an asset to the Community.

The use of wildflower borders along fence lines in place of herbicide make a colourful alternative.

The newly completed paved "shared spaces" scheme throughout the town centre gives a modern look to the area.

Section C

The management of the Abbeygate arcade and their support of the Bloom initiative.

Community participation and bloom related activities throughout the town.

The quantity of bloom group floral displays throughout the town

Areas for Development

Section A

Consider a walk through Peoples Park to fully appreciate the refurbishment works carried out.

Visit or show in presentation / portfolio allotment activities within the area.

Continue with the plans for the works at Browns Orchard / The Towers if this area is to remain on the tour schedule.

Section B

Interpretation at the Abbeygate arcade would improve the understanding of its heritage.

Continue and further develop areas of wildflower borders along fencelines etc.

Section C

Generally, make the most of the judging time allocated, time spent at Howard Grove was not used to the best advantage and then the tour appeared rushed at the end.

A: 91 B: 43 C: 46 Total: 180

SMALL CITY

Loughborough

Gold Award 179 points

Judged on 9th July

Judges: Chris Beal and John Simpson

Judges Award: The whole community for making a real difference to their communities through their hard work and endeavour

The sun came out and so did Loughborough's Communities. Loughborough is undergoing a significant infrastructural change; however this did not detract from a wonderful tour. Many familiar sites were included on the tour, along with some new delights. There are now 36 entries into the 'Its Your Neighbourhood' Category. Loughborough continues to thrive and shows no signs of stopping

Areas of Achievement

Section A

The growing number of Neighbourhood Entries is fantastic. The judges were particularly impressed with the "Chapman Street" complex, and the way it had embraced the heritage of the area. Also the use of recycled materials. Horticultural practice and impact were particularly strong. Harry Cooks garden, several roundabouts, the beautiful Queens Park, and John Storer House were particularly noteworthy. A number of businesses had made a real effort to enhance their premises with the use of baskets and troughs. Granby Dental, and Hawley and Rogers Solicitors opposite the Queens Park were particularly eye-catching

Section B

The judges were impressed with the effort to enhance the environment for wildlife. The bedding plants chosen to encourage pollinators. The "Holt Drive Green Belt" is a fantastic example of how wildlife and people can share an open space.

There was a virtual absence of any litter, graffiti, fly posting, and dog fouling, despite it being a market day.

Local Heritage was displayed in numerous places across the City. The 'Great Paul Bell Casting' at Queens Park gives a fascinating insight into one of Loughborough's oldest businesses, Taylors Bell Foundry

Section C

The obvious link with the Loughborough Echo is a real benefit in promoting the Bloom Campaign.

Support in kind, through volunteering is impressive. The portfolio mentions that the "Loughborough Student Union Action Volunteers" have given more than 2,000 hours of volunteer time.

The opening presentation showed year round involvement, and gave the judges a real feel for the effort and endeavour that goes into a successful campaign.

Areas for Development

Section A

Continue to liaise with the County Council over the cutting of roadside verges. The judges noted that additional cuts were being made but felt that in some areas it was letting the entry down.

Continue to encourage participation from the business sector. The walk through the City highlighted big gaps in participation and support for the bloom effort

Section B

Not enough information was given about recycling initiatives and the work to educate young people. The portfolio mentions the partnership with Serco. Maybe have a representative from Serco meet the judges to explain in greater detail the partnership and how it works. Your portfolio makes reference to a number of other initiatives that were not mentioned on the day. Elaborate on the work you are doing.

Section C

Give consideration to the structure of the tour. Ample evidence was shown of the tremendous efforts being made by the local community groups. The judges recognise the difficult job you have in organising a tour, and sometimes leaving people out. However maybe sacrificing a community group would have allowed time to meet your recycling partners or visit a recycling area?

A: 90 B: 42 C: 47 Total: 179

SMALL CITY**Oadby & Wigston****Gold Award 170 points**Judged on 8th July

Judges: Chris Beal & John Simpson

Judges Award: The Pride of the Borough loyalty card as a way of fundraising and increasing membership

The day commenced with a delightful presentation of Pride of the Borough of Oadby & Wigston activities throughout the year. The tour saw examples of works by all sectors of the community and the judges look forward to seeing the results in future years of all the on-going construction and modernisation works to the town centres. The tour concluded with a visit to the wonderful, (and free to enter), Leicester Botanical Garden

Areas of Achievement

Section A

The carpet bedding at Peace Park was nice to see in these times of cutbacks.

The planting at Leicester racecourse is maintained to a high standard.

Green spaces observed in passing on the tour were all generally well maintained.

Section B

Although some works were identified some untidy vacant plots were observed on the tour.

Show more examples of areas within sub category A4 above and their contribution to the Pride of the Borough.

Section C

There is a vast range of community involvement throughout the Borough

The work by the St John Fisher School within their garden is encouraging to see.

The Pride of the Borough loyalty card is a wonderful idea to encourage membership and fundraising.

The knitted poppy initiative to raise money for other charitable funds in this WW1 commemorative year.

Areas for Development

Section A

Although some works were identified some untidy vacant plots were observed on the tour.

Show more examples of areas within sub category A4 above and their contribution to the Pride of the Borough.

Section B

Improve the presentation of heritage to the judges on the visit

A small number of vacant plots in need of work were noticed on the tour

Show / tell more about wildlife & conservation issues in other areas of the Borough rather than concentrating on Brocks Hill

Section C

Investigate sources of sponsorship to assist with securing the future of the bloom initiative.

The round-up of photographs on the presentation is good but a few titles / captions would be helpful.

The notice board in Peace Park was almost empty, use it to the advantage of the Pride of the Boroughs advantage and advertise your fantastic work.

A: 86 B: 41 C: 43 Total: 170

SMALL CITY

Chesterfield

Silver Gilt Award 156 points

Western Power Distribution Best School Ornamental Garden: St Mary's Catholic Primary School

Judged on 18th July

Judges: Chris Beal and John Simpson

Judges Award: St Marys Primary School for their efforts to commemorate the First World War.

The tour of Chesterfield started at the recently refurbished Eastwood Park with fine examples of art, new play area and excellent community facilities. The tour moved on to see some splendid allotments and the very knowledgeable children of St Marys School. A walk around the town centre saw some good decorative planters and the excellent restoration work of the historic Market Hall. The tour finished with a walk around the ever popular and attractive grounds of Ringwood Hall

Areas of Achievement

Section A

Chesterfields Green Spaces are of a high quality, Eastwood Park being a particular jewel. Other noteworthy sites include Queens Park, and Holmebrook Valley Park, which is supported by an active "Friends Group". The planters and baskets in the Centre of Chesterfield were of a high quality. A large number of Pubs had made a real effort to enhance their premises by adorning them with tubs, troughs, and baskets. The new community garden at Eastwood Park is a fantastic area that is clearly being enjoyed by the whole community including the little girl we met making a "magic potion" for the plants. It was a real treat to talk to the children St Marys Primary School. The judges were taken on a tour of the marvellous school grounds by Brooke, Theo, Alfie, Olivia, and Megan. The children were knowledgeable and enthusiastic and able to demonstrate their passion to the judges perfectly

Section B

Chesterfield has a rich heritage and that was shown off to good effect in several areas. The stained glass window at "Sterling Court" and even the little touches to the brackets supporting the town centre hanging baskets, depicting the Church Spire in their design. The signage and street furniture were generally of a good standard. The management of Holmebrook Valley Park to encourage wildlife is very good. Standing Dead Wood, Grazed Wildflower meadows, surveys etc are fantastic initiatives

Section C

The resident's involvement at Pevensey Green is outstanding. Their efforts have made a real difference to the area. Year round involvement is evident from the portfolio. The support from your main sponsor "Ringwood Hall" along with others is making a significant contribution to the bloom campaign.

Areas for Development

Section A

Continue to attract support for the campaign from the Business Sector.

Some areas of grass cutting were letting the entry down. Some roadside verges had only just been cut leaving some dead grass on the surface, or giving an uneven finish to the work. Consider taking the judges to a Church as part of the tour. Produce leaflets for Tree Trails, Heritage Walks. Promote the bloom campaign on a dedicated web page

Section B

Recycling is given a mention in the portfolio but there was a lack of dialogue or evidence shown on the tour.

Consider having a recycling officer meet future judges on the tour to explain initiatives, and campaigns. Some Gap sites were observed on the tour, along with some areas of street weed

Section C

There was a lack of evidence of Press Cuttings, articles promoting the Bloom Campaign.

Use the 10 year anniversary to evaluate the entry. Pay particular attention to section "C" of the judging criteria. The judges felt they were not shown enough evidence of how you are communicating with the residents of Chesterfield. Develop the idea of a Bloom Launch, using the beautifully restored conservatory at the Queens Park. Use this to promote involvement, and drum up sponsorship. The idea of a plant sale is exactly the right type of thinking

A: 85 B: 38 C: 33 Total: 156

CITY

🏆 **Northampton**

Silver Gilt Award and Category winner, 163 points

🏆 **Taylor's Bulbs Trophy for the Most Improved Entrant**

Judged on 10th July

Judges: Simon Lucas and Richard Stephen

Judges Award: Friends of West Hunsbury Park for their on going work to improve the country park

It was a pleasure to return to Northampton and see the improvements since last year's entry, especially the greater community involvement, continuing this can only improve the Northampton not only in this competition but even more so for its residents.

The (bus!) tour was a different route which has given the opportunity to involve more communities in the Bloom competition.

The theme this year was 'Remembrance and Celebration' and was reflected throughout the tour with poppies appearing as carpet bedding on a main road and as plants from seeds appearing in many locations and especially amongst the many areas of wild flowers sown on highway verges. The children of Lyncrest Primary School greeted us with a musical welcome before enthusiastically escorting us on a tour of their delightful school grounds. It was a pleasure to meet with staff and service users of Workbridge at both the town centre pop-up garden and their garden centre

Areas of Achievement

Section A

Lyncrest School as an example of the work going on in schools to include the natural environment as part of daily life.

The Hunsbury Hill Centre, with the input from the friends group, Northamptonshire ACRE, Groundworks and others many works are under way to discover and develop new areas and with its multi-use this is developing into a real asset for the people of Northampton.

Workbridge with both the staff and service users showing their integration into the community, the garden centre and associated units including ceramics workshop and the inspirational pop-up village garden in the town centre. Friends of West Hunsbury Parks with their grants enabling them to improve the country parks, making it more welcoming to visitors notably with the new 'Functional Urban Art' sign posts. We wish them well with their plans to rediscover the Iron Age Fort hidden under the trees.

The well-developed theme hanging baskets and especially the barrier baskets were notable around the town. The many areas of wildflower planting seen on well-maintained highway verges. Delapre Park looked a picture in the sunshine and good work was being carried out by Olympus Care group.

Section B

The clean centre with newly installed water feature. There was very little litter on a long tour, just a couple of spots that let down an otherwise excellent route. The shadow art in the new North gate Bus Station. We saw examples of Northampton's heritage from around 500 years BC at the Iron Age Fort, the Guildhall and historic town square with the Welsh House to more modern times and the Northampton Shoe and Boot reflected in floral features

Section C

Lamp column banners in the market square promoting Northampton in Bloom. Greater community involvement in the bloom committee e.g. British Legion and on tour. Good support from the two BID's and other businesses e.g. Stagecoach for providing the bus.

Areas for Development

Section A

If possible show areas of new planting, either on the tour or through photos (we didn't see the new planting at the university accommodation, spotted on our way home!). Equally we would like to see more residential front gardens (remember in Bloom concentrates on what can be seen from the highway as this has the greater impact on a neighbourhood).

Is there a group who could be encouraged to work on the grounds of All Saints Church? This central location could be sympathetically maintained and has the potential to balance with the adjacent Remembrance Garden.

The Market Square seemed lacking in floral displays for such a large area, perhaps multi tower units could add an impact? The 4 unit column baskets were not as well developed, and a different theme, to those on other building

though we missed out on seeing many of the glorious hanging baskets on adjacent streets viewed on our stroll back to our vehicles

Section B

The Hunsbury Hill Centre will benefit from more information/interpretation boards; hopefully these will be included in its development plans.

Meet with a representative to inform judges about Northampton's approach to conservation and biodiversity to supplement those areas seen

Section C

Make full use of the welcome presentation to highlight what has happened in the past 12 months (judging category C4), photographs however presented can be a great way of demonstrating this, a scrapbook of press cuttings is also very helpful to evidence your promotional activities.

Ensure the judges are told of and better still shown evidence of the good works going on in other areas that cannot be included in any particular years' tour. If there has been a particular outstanding activity that we cannot see on the route, could those that took part meet the judges at an appropriate point to show pictures and tell them about it?

Could the judges meet with a Payback team (or at least the team leader) on route to see an example of their work?

Point out the work new groups have carried out since learning of the judging in their area.

Timing is always difficult in any judging tour, make sure all points visited are relevant remembering all venues should be seen from the public highway or be freely accessible to the public

A: 83 B: 42 C: 38 Total: 163

CITY

Mansfield

Silver Gilt Award 162 points

 **Barcham Trees East Midlands in Bloom Award for the Best New Permanent Landscape: Titchfield Park**

Judged on 16th July

Judges: Simon Lucas & Richard Stephen

Judges Award: The Little Roots project located within Longyards Allotments for their work with children and schools

Mansfield's entry consists of 4 towns with each ward being given a budget to purchase additional planters etc which were seen on the tour. There are 10 Friends groups, Residents Associations and a good number of schools/Academy's supporting the Parks team in this entry.

Electric vehicles have been introduced into the parks, all green waste is used as compost and recycled plastic benches, knee rails are now used as part of an environmentally conscious campaign.

School children have been involved in wildflower, bulb and tree planting.

The commendable Your Dog Your Responsibility campaign, using a poster design from a winning school entry was later seen on fencing to play areas reminding dog owners to clear up after their dogs. This is backed with the Neighbourhood Warden Service who issued fixed penalty fines for litter or use a restorative justice scheme for under 16's who have to carry out a period of litter picking.

Areas of Achievement

Section A

Purple Flag award for BID and 4 Green Flags are to be commended, with hopefully more this year. The wildflower roof on new Queen's Place can now be seen from the ground and demonstrates this technique to the public. Pleased to note improved maintenance of highway verges now they are back 'in house'. Carr Bank Park and Titchfield Park were looking particularly impressive. There were a number of well-presented front gardens seen on route (can these be encouraged to enter into a local Front Garden Competition?) The entry is strongly supported by 65 Four Tiered Towers and 150 Hanging Baskets

Section B

Maun Conservation Group for their ongoing work and in particular fundraising for, and creating, the new pond area complete with dipping platforms. The Council providing free graffiti removal for residents is a great idea. The new wildflower planting and woodland walk at King George V Park and other locations around the city. Congratulations to the children who were involved in creating the new 'Dog Mess' poster. The Little Roots Allotment project seems to be 'growing' from strength to strength. The Woodland Burials (within an urban environment) at Mansfield Woodhouse Cemetery was looking good and seems to be gaining popularity. The 'International' Clean Up campaign was very imaginative

Section C

Bee hives in Woodhouse Community Orchard. The bulb planting carried out last year by a wide range of groups. The International Clean Up Mansfield Day initiative and the piling up of collected waste bags to demonstrate just how much litter people drop. A very helpful presentation was given prior to going on the tour. Finances for various projects have come from S106 agreements, Capital funding and Local Improvement Scheme Funds. Some good baskets on display by businesses supporting the bloom e.g. Four Seasons complex, Halifax, RBS, School Wear Centre, Sir John Cockle Pub. etc

Areas for Development

Section A

Weeds and dead trees were noted in the town centre. Little more need be said about this, but it does let the town centre down. Could additional hanging baskets or prominent tower planters be added to the market square area? Barrier baskets can be very effective displays especially at main junctions around the town, is this something to offer to at least some wards? On the drive tour it could be seen that the One Stop Car Park had a poor planting display

Section B

Considerable amounts of litter were noted in the town centre, and perhaps a campaign to deal with this could be instigated. The Espire sculpture is a credit to the city but try to make more of the artwork opportunities available. If the proposed street furniture renewals cannot be achieved within a reasonable timescale, some items would benefit from a 'lick of paint' before they start to look very shabby and run down (see last year's judges' comments).

Consider appropriate signage/interpretation boards in King George V park to inform casual visitors about the fungi, wildflowers etc.

Some signage / interpretation boards would, we believe, be beneficial to the community and visitors alike at the Woodhouse Community Orchard

Section C

This entry appears to be very much council lead, whilst there is nothing wrong with this, greater community involvement in the planning etc for example on an in Bloom committee can encourage more people to get involved and share the workload with officers. For example someone may like to create a scrapbook of press cuttings, this is an effective way of demonstrating C2, C3 etc.

Create as many opportunities as possible for judges to meet with some of the community groups, even if we do not visit their project on the tour, we could be shown photo etc of their work. This not only encourages them but gives us a better feel of the strength of your community involvement.

Make fuller use of the welcome presentation to inform judges of activities that have taken place over the past year in particular community group activities. eg litter picking, bulb planting.

Consider introducing your own floral competitions for your community – Best Garden, Best Pub, Best School Garden etc

A: 83 B: 38 C: 41 Total: 162

LARGE CITY

🏆 Nottingham

Gold Award and Category Winner, 176 points

🏆 **Western Power Distribution Best School Fruit and Vegetable Garden:** Ellis Guilford School and Sports College

Judged on 14th July

Judges: Simon Lucas and Richard Stephen

Judges Award: Friends of Wollaton Local Nature Reserve

We were welcomed by the Chair of Nottingham in Bloom Working Group along with other committee members, several of their partner organisations eg Capital One, Nottingham Bee Keepers Association and Robin Hood within the grounds of Nottingham Castle. We enjoyed meeting many of the city's partners and volunteers which included Sarah and Helen from Articulture, Martin and Lee from the University of Nottingham, Sim Duhra and pupils from the William Booth School. The sun shone throughout the day making the driving and walking elements of the tour most enjoyable for the judges. We were treated to 'old and new' sections of Nottingham ranging from the Lace Market through to one of the city's newest developments, Phase 2 of Nottingham University Jubilee Campus, photographed all the way by Nottingham in Bloom's own 'paparazzi' Tracey Whitefoot from Whitefoot Photography.

Areas of Achievement

Section A

The judges were impressed with the high quality planting, its appropriateness and sustainability throughout the tour including wonderful themed floral beds, colourful barrier baskets, 15 triple flowering towers and well maintained roundabouts (e.g. Broadgate and Chapel Bar) across the city. The 3 Carpet Bedding Roundels in the Castle Grounds ('Trent to Trenches' designed by Cassidy Redgate was particularly imaginative) were very striking and being well maintained. Special mention for the excellent landscaping schemes throughout the Nottingham University Jubilee Campus (Wildlife Lakes, Permanent Planting and wildflower meadows. Also worth mentioning were the Jekyll and Millennium Gardens. Some excellent hanging baskets were admired on the Admiral Rodney Pub and two other businesses Sharpe, Young and Pearce and Fellow, Martin and Clayton to mention a few. Wollaton Park, its gardens, the open spaces and grass verges were being well maintained.

Section B

Throughout the tour, the overall impression was that the street scene was very clean and tidy. The 170 Litter Compactors across the City Centre are most impressive and have contributed significantly to keeping the city tidy, saving funds which could be redistributed but also in educating visitors and residents alike to have pride in their environment. The on-going 'Wicker Trail' (14 works of art) that attracts interest across the city (including a 'weekly selfie' competition) is an amazing project. The historic Lace Market is slowly being transformed into 'the place to visit'. Sarah Manton and Helen Taylor introduced the judges to the very successful 'Articulture' project with its wonderful wall art, small planting displays and unique shopping experiences. The Queens Drive Park & Ride EcoHub is an excellent facility with its florally decorated Information Office. There are current city centre links for cyclists and electric (cycle hire and car charging) cars not forgetting future plans for travel and educational opportunities for children. The 'giant' flower pots, near High Cross St. containing an English Yew tree in each pot were amazing. The pupils from William Booth School implemented a clever 'recycling' project under the theme 'Reduce, Reuse, Repair, Recycle' in conjunction with one of the carpet bed displays – an Owl. Part of the council's city wide WISE programmes (Waste in Schools Education). The Wollaton Village Dovecote has been transformed into a small museum and the grounds are being looked after by volunteers from the WI, a lovely project in its own right. Congratulations to the Friends of Wollaton Local Nature Reserve for all their hard work carried out at Martins Ponds and the adjacent Harrisons Plantation and the nearby canal basin

Section C

Congratulations to Will Price for the Nottingham in Bloom video. The excellent support from sponsors and partners such as Whitefoot Photography, McDonalds, Capital One, The Orchard Hotel and many others. The development of the 'Creative Quarter' and the hugely successful 'Articulture' program getting more and more businesses involved. Across the city, business support has been very good again. Good to see the 'Evergreen' group getting involved in the bloom campaign – wonderful pictures. Good publicity in the 'Grass Roots' Magazine as well. Impressed to see a representative from the newly formed 'Friends of Wollaton Park'. Congratulations to all volunteers / volunteer groups for all their hard work (7,208hrs.)

Areas for Development

Section A

Visit a school and church grounds, enter a Best hotel / Pub into the regional 'special' awards. Improve the quality and density of planting along central reservation of Maid Marion Way, there appeared to be a number of large gaps. It is always good for judges to see an allotment along the route. Was any progress made in resurrecting the former Allotment Competition?

Section B

The wonderful 'Bee' campaign would benefit if rolled out across the University grounds and Wollaton Park. Continue to wage war with the elusive chewing gum droppers. In last year's report it was suggested that there was a need for Interpretation signs which would inform the public about the wildflower and community orchard

Section C

Disappointed not to have any representatives from the local Press or Radio Station. Consider developing a programme of 'Bloom' banners across the city. Some photographic evidence of community litter picks would enhance the portfolio. Add a credit on the portfolio to Cavalry Design for their free production of the portfolio. Would be helpful if you could list the groups (voluntary organisations / businesses) who make up your 'in bloom' committee. It will be interesting to see what influence / difference the new Friends of Wollaton Park make over the next 12 months.

A: 91 B: 45 C: 40 Total: 176

URBAN COMMUNITY

The Meadows

Silver Gilt Award and Category Winner, 162 points

Judged on 11th July

Judges: Richard Adams and Dave Bramwell

This Urban Community has a remarkable story to tell and the Judges were impressed with the tour and how well the community as a whole had worked together to make the visit most enjoyable. There were too many highlights to mention and it is true to say that the judges cannot wait to see how the projects progress over the coming years.

Areas of Achievement

Section A

The variety of baskets and planters on the Terraces and surrounding areas are to be commended

The community gardening at Hunter Street needs a special mention due to the lack of available space and the creative use of it

The transformation of Mundella Park has turned the play area into a real asset for the community

Section B

The work in developing areas of conservation at Greenfields School and the educational resource was invaluable to the students, the only thing from the judges point of view was that they would have liked to stay all day

The development of the Story Poles to highlight key areas of the communities heritage and culture were to be admired

There were many examples of art in the landscape and well maintained street furniture

Section C

The enthusiasm and the ongoing commitment of Greenfield School is exceptional

The Arkwright Meadows Community Gardens are an amazing community asset and the judges are already looking forward to a return visit next year

This multi-cultural community have worked hard on communications and this has benefitted all involved

Areas for Development

Section A

Consider developing a central floral feature to highlight the work of the In Bloom group and community as a whole

The judges are looking forward to seeing the water feature in the Memorial Gardens brought back to life

Continue to develop floral features around business premises and commercial ventures

Section B

The judges are looking forward to seeing the installed Story Poles carved from the recently felled lime trees due to the new tram system being developed in the area

Continue to improve the street scene and aim for a consistent service across the area

Section C

Continue to work with the local media to further promote the In Bloom campaign

Consider including a schedule of events in the portfolio to further evidence all year round involvement

Continue the excellent work in gaining external funding, particularly in support of the long term sustainability of the Arkwright Meadows Community Gardens

A: 82 B: 39 C: 41 Total: 162

URBAN COMMUNITY

Evington

Silver Gilt Award 152 points

Judged on 8th July

Judges: Dave Bramwell & Richard Adams

Judges Award: To Helen Pettman for her commitment to Evington in Bloom.

This In Bloom group is going from strength to strength with a well-planned tour showing the judges the highlights of Evington. The community spirit within this multi-cultural population is to be applauded; the Judges had an enjoyable visit and wish the In Bloom group every success in the National Competition

Areas of Achievement

Section A

The well-presented grounds at Evington Hall

The development of the Graceworks Project and transformation of the site was inspirational

The Labyrinth and gardening projects at Linden Primary School were to be admired

Section B

The themed signage and interpretation through the whole of the area was impressive

The area of the Arboretum and Orchard were a real asset to this community

The interpretation and historic work at Piggy's Hollow was to be applauded

Section C

The community participation within the Grace Works initiative was remarkable and should be used as an example of Best Practice

The communication through this multi-cultural region is excellent and has really brought the community together

The portfolio highlights good all year round involvement and demonstrated that the In Bloom group had publicised their campaign well

Areas for Development

Section A

Continue the excellent work with the school project

Continue the development of sustainable planting throughout the area

Consider moving some of the floral displays closer together to increase the impact on the community as a whole

Section B

Continue to improve the overall impression of the Street Scene and aim for a consistent standard throughout the area

Continue to develop the excellent work around the War Memorial

Consider the installation of additional seating within the community garden adjacent to the Co-op

Section C

Continue to engage with young people on all aspects of the In Bloom

Consider further projects that may engage with commercial sponsors

Consider developing a longer term plan for the Group and continue to target areas for improvement

A: 79 B: 33 C: 40 Total: 152

URBAN COMMUNITY

Littleover in Bloom

Silver Award 130 points

Judged on 7th July

Judges: Dave Bramwell and Richard Adams

The sun shone and a variety of displays were on view around this Urban Community which has retained its identity, whilst being part of a large city. The ongoing projects completed by the In Bloom group are to be commended and the particular highlight was the tribute to the fallen soldiers of World War One.

Areas of Achievement

Section A

The focal point for the community had to be the display depicting the Teddy Bears Picnic which was the theme running through the tour.

The residential front gardens seen on the tour were full of colour and well maintained.

The variety of planters around the main shopping area was a joy to see.

The allotments were impressive and good to see all in use.

Section B

The Littleover commemoration Trail was inspirational and highlighted the strength of community feeling for those lost in World War One.

The good use of recycled water across various sites on the tour

The innovative use of the old bath tub to create a feature planting display in a residential garden

Section C

The portfolio was well presented and a useful guide to projects completed throughout the year.

The involvement of the local young people is excellent; a particular highlight was visiting the students at the High School.

The sponsorship from local businesses to continually support the In Bloom campaign was to be commended.

Areas for Development

Section A

The judges would recommend moving some of the displays together to create a bigger impact.

Look at the standard of maintenance on Clemson's Park and see if this could be improved upon, this would add value to the tour and most importantly increase visitor enjoyment.

Continue to expand the good work at Derby High School Garden.

Section B

Continue to improve the street scene and presentation of verges as this will make a big difference to visitors and residents of Littleover.

Continue to promote the heritage around the community as there is a lot of potential in the local area.

Take every opportunity to use sustainable planting and wildflowers to minimise maintenance and create capacity within the Group to allow other projects to be developed.

Section C

Ideally start the visit with the presentation as it sets the scene for tour.

Continue to expand the In Bloom group particularly working with different members of the community such as the Horticultural Society.

Continue to work with the Friends of Littleover Parks as this has the potential to make a big difference to the community as a whole.

A: 66 B: 27 C: 37 Total: 130

URBAN COMMUNITY

Hamilton in Bloom

Silver Award 129 points

Judged on 8th July

Judges: Richard Adams & Dave Bramwell

This was the judge's first visit to see the Hamilton In Bloom entry and the group did not disappoint. From the initial presentation to the well prepared tour the group were proud to show the judges what the community had achieved. A great start to the In Bloom campaign and the judges are looking forward to returning next year

Areas of Achievement

Section A

The Jerome Project was to be admired and a testament to the dedication of the group to seeing a project through. The variety and quantity of planters really enhance your visit to this community.

The local business premises and shopping areas were a real delight with mixed planting and use of planting at different heights really softened the hard landscaping, a credit to the overall design of the site

Section B

The amazing work by the students from Gateway College in transforming a storage container into a stunning piece of art.

Hamilton Park has amazing potential and the works of the Parks Team to reclaim the site was excellent.

The high standard of street furniture around the whole community was to be commended

Section C

The Jerome project, both in raising the funding and delivery of the project in such a short space of time was amazing.

The enthusiasm of the In Bloom group and their desire to improve the whole area is to be commended.

The portfolio and presentation boards highlighting the year round commitment of the group

Areas for Development

Section A

Continue the work to improve the landscaping around the area and the judges are particularly looking forward to seeing the how the new housing areas develop.

Consider highlighting more residential properties on the tour as they are a real asset to the community.

Continue to improve the maintenance of verges and public open spaces and consider an agreed standard across the whole area

Section B

Continue to work with the local students to enhance the Gateway College Garden.

Continue the work at Hamilton Park; we understand that there is a lot to do. Try to complete small areas and before you know it the whole site will be back to its former glory.

Continue to develop the work around the Humber Stone; this is a real asset and focal point to celebrate the town's heritage

Section C

Consider developing a plan that guides the group over the next few years, this will allow you to target areas and ensure that newly developed projects have a long term sustainable future.

Continue the excellent work in relation to fundraising, as the judges are looking forward to seeing what you achieve in the coming years. A great first time entry ... well done

A: 68 B: 29 C: 32 Total: 129

COASTAL RESORT

🏆 **Cleethorpes** **Gold Award and Category Winner, 180 points**

🏆 **East Midlands in Bloom Award for the Least Littered Environment**

Judged on 8th July

Judges: Doug Stacey and Andy Chambers

Judges Award: For the many conservation and wildlife initiatives developed through the enthusiasm and knowledge of Mike Sleight NELC Ecology Officer

As always the visit to Cleethorpes was inspirational, displaying all that is best about Britain in Bloom. If these outstanding Gold Medal standards can be maintained through a serious recession it increases hope that the Bloom will still be a source of delight to communities nationwide in another 50 years' time.

This entry has a clear vision, strong belief and enthusiastic highly committed leadership. They seek to involve the whole community through various partnerships and are ready to adapt and innovate as external circumstances change.

Aspiring entrants to EMIB could learn much from this flagship model of Bloom success; already it has had a very positive influence elsewhere over recent years.

Well done Team Cleethorpes on a very well merited Gold Medal in Bin B's Jubilee year! Never too early to plan for the 2064 entry!

Areas of Achievement

Section A

The excellent Kingsway carpet bed commemorating WWI and the high standard of well maintained planting everywhere.

The addition of groups of hardy perennials amongst the maturing sustainable shrub plantings.

The improvements to the local competitions and the visit to the Best Front Garden winner for 2014 – the quite outstanding and beautiful garden belonging to Brian and Janet Rose

Section B

The well managed, maturing Country Park and LNR marking its 20th anniversary.

The new environmental Discovery Centre which provides information on RAMSAR sites around the world including the Humber estuary, and will interpret sites of nature conservation in Cleethorpes.

The new NE Lincs dog fouling campaign, retention of Blue Flag and further improvements in recycling.

Art in the landscape, often reflecting local heritage is excellent

Section C

As in previous year's community participation, communication and campaigning ideas are excellent.

The designed displays of information and interpretation of the landscape are excellent throughout the judging route.

The opportunity will be available to take this to a deeper educational level at the new Discovery Centre.

Areas for Development

Section A

Ensure that the comparative trials of Agrotas absorbents are effectively recorded to see whether they could in future extend re-watering periods and reduce use of water

Section B

Admittedly a very difficult problem, but explore ways to more effectively control Canada Geese at the boating lake.

The excessive numbers are causing a nuisance and are despoiling the surroundings

Section C

Continue to recruit younger volunteers to assist the management group as a way of achieving long term sustainability of the project.

Consider the use of Facebook to attract volunteers to assist with specific practical projects – this is working well elsewhere and attracts a younger age group

A: 91 B: 45 C: 44 Total: 180

COASTAL RESORT**Mablethorpe****Silver Gilt Award 151 points**Judged on 7th July

Judges: Doug Stacey and Andy Chambers

Judges Award: Linkage Green for their beautiful floral displays created by students with disabilities

Mablethorpe was judged on a lovely sunny afternoon and the judges were encouraged by the progress made by the Bloom Group since last year. The Group has been strengthened and is looking forward, improving links with business and local authorities. Several new initiatives have been implemented including the installation of Art in The Landscape in the middle of the attractive Dunes terraced gardens. This takes the form of a giant bucket and spade planter symbolising the town's heritage as a family seaside holiday destination, and is a significant achievement for the Group. Further improvements were demonstrating a greater sense of vitality and Pride in Place and were clearly being enjoyed by large numbers of visitors.

Areas of Achievement

Section A

Much improved floral displays in hanging baskets and in the Dunes flowers beds – one showing the England flag – sadly failing to stimulate our efforts in the World Cup! Linkage Green, Cross Inn landscaping, Trefoil Guild bed celebrating the Bloom's Jubilee were all very good

Section B

Following incredibly high tides the successful beach replenishment programme and the planting of marram grass to encourage sand dune formation involving the Environment Agency and the Town Council. The retention of the Blue Flag Award for the town's splendid beach. Also for gaining the new Seaside Award. The many minor improvements involving volunteers eg repainting of old planters, seat repairs

Section C

The strengthening of the group's leadership, increasing numbers of volunteers and improving links with community organisations. The restoration of the town's Civic Pride Awards and the impressive quality of the winning Best Front Garden. The successful fundraising efforts, effective use of Facebook for the recruitment of volunteers and the much improved portfolio

Areas for Development

Section A

The newly planted boat at Station Road junction is commendable – consider moving it a little closer to the road and from under the tree.

Extend the developing ideas for a 'pavement café culture' incorporating planters e.g. Lantern Court/Presto, and encourage further businesses to participate by copying good examples such as Lidl.

Over the next 4 year WWI commemoration period, consider how to improve the frontage to the War Memorial by landscaping.

Continue to press ELDC to plant borders at the Dunes with labour saving screen planting of the dominant brickwork.

Explore with ELDC how the Bloom might help with adaptations to Queens Park

Section B

Seek improved liaison with ELDC over the maintenance of the excellent Seaholme Bank wildflower plantings.

At future judgings either visit or provide additional info in the portfolio about the St Mary's Park conservation area

Section C

Impressive progress has been made since last year. Continue strengthening the group's leadership and voluntary resource to do more of the same improvements. The link especially to ELDC seems to pose difficulties – explore how this might be strengthened to your mutual benefit

A: 77 B: 37 C: 37 Total: 151

BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT (BID) CATEGORY**Melton****Silver Gilt Award and John Williamson Trophy, 160 points**Judged on 17th July

Judges: Doug Stacey & Andy Chambers

Melton BID started operations in 2011 for a 5 year period and will seek renewal from 2016. It seeks to enhance the vitality and visual appearance of the town centre, raising its' profile as a tourist and shopping destination. The Melton BID has worked closely with Melton in Bloom, the Borough Council, the Melton Mowbray Town Estate, businesses and community groups throughout to promote the town centre and its' horticultural achievements. Melton benefits from the presence of beautiful town centre parks and gardens within the BID area. Unusually these are owned and run for the benefit of the public by the Town Estate, a charity founded in 1549. Liaison is assisted by the BID chair also occupying the post of Town Estate Bailiff. This was an impressive first entry to the new BID category. So many groups are working in partnership for the revitalisation of the town centre and are succeeding in attracting more visitors to the town.

Areas of Achievement

Section A

The well maintained beautifully planted town centre parks, especially the colour themed beds and borders at Egerton Gardens. The extensive town centre retail hanging basket scheme, and the increased number of tiered planters all presented on a Jubilee Growing for Gold theme.

The excellent design and planting by Melton in Bloom volunteers of the Heritage Garden and the St Mary's churchyard borders.

Many other worthy individual contributions including R. Barnes Funeral Directors, Wetherspoons, Anne of Cleves PH garden, Beaten Path Coffee House bed, Cutting Room and the Four Seasons bed designed and planted by MBC apprentices

Section B

The large numbers of new bird boxes, arrangements for composting and voluntary waterway maintenance.

The BID trade waste recycling scheme for all 443 businesses.

The Market Place enhancement scheme and Art in the Landscape e.g. King Street arch and screen.

Excellent presentation of local heritage throughout town centre e.g. superb Heritage Garden and historical information panels

Section C

Effective partnership working including large numbers of volunteers.

The extensive events programme involving the whole community.

The resourcefulness of all involved, and the commonly held desire to work together for the good of the town.

The excellent pre-tour presentation and portfolios

Areas for Development

Section A

As space is restricted for more tiered planters in the Market Place consider 2 tiers of baskets on the lamp posts to further increase floral impact.

Explore whether barrier baskets could be provided at strategic junctions e.g. junction of Wilton Road/Nottingham Road/Norman Way, junction of Leicester Road/Wilton Road/Leicester Street.

Ensure good quality, highly visible landscaping is provided as part of the college redevelopment especially facing the busy road junction

Section B

It was noted that street furniture is subject to a regular repainting programme. The railings on Burton Street appear to be overdue!

Valuable marks were lost because of the disappointing standard of cleanliness in the Market Place.

The Boyes building wall detracts from the steadily improving Wilton Road. The proposed new art work is commended. Is there also scope for a few planted hayricks?

Consider the Anthony Hancock wall for murals or climbing plants

Section C

This BID entry is very good and if all the ideas for the future are implemented it can only get better. Its' great strength is the involvement of so many partners, so continuing consultation and nurturing of relationships will be vital for future success

A: 62 B: 58 C: 40 Total: 160

BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT (BID) CATEGORY**Nottingham****Silver Gilt Award 152 points**Judged on 17th July

Judges: Doug Stacey & Andy Chambers

Last year Nottingham completed its first year as a combined BID bringing together the previously separate Retail and Leisure BIDs to form one of the largest BIDs in the UK. The new company's vision is *to contribute to making Nottingham a shopping and leisure destination of choice in the East Midlands, maximise the city's full trading potential and enhance its national reputation*. It works in partnership with Nottingham City Council, the highly successful Nottingham in Bloom and several local organisations. It was a joy to see, on such a hot day, so many families enjoying the tropical beach attraction in the old Market Square

Areas of Achievement

Section A

The innovative Floral Trail, this year extended to 14 flower filled willow sculptures around the city centre. The very pleasant Paul Smith and Jamie Oliver Gardens offering a tranquil retreat from the busy shopping areas. The floral displays and permanent planting around parts of the centre and the old Market Square e.g. Council House, Beach and local businesses; also at the Lace Market and St Peter's Church. The successful transformation of Broad Street by the sculptural composition of the clipped Yews in the giant colourful pots, complemented by local business contributions

Section B

Standards of cleanliness on a busy Thursday afternoon were outstanding. Installation of large numbers of Solar and Belly Bins have greatly reduced litter and assisted waste recycling. The BID's purchase of a specialist pavement cleaning machine has been instrumental in enhancing appearance. Excellent examples of Art in the Landscape initiatives involving volunteers are underway also a scheme to improve the appearance of vacant premises. It was good to see the authentic Wild Flower Bed at Cobden Chambers and to learn that bees are being kept on top of buildings in Broad Street

Section C

Presence of the press on the judging tour and evidence of coverage throughout the year. The involvement of children in the Floral Trail initiative. The partnership working involved to bring about the improved appearance of the pavements

Areas for Development

Section A

Whilst the summer Floral Trail is a brilliant idea and should continue to be expanded, the overall floral impact in the centre is reduced from recent years. All partners involved should explore how the floral impact can be increased, and also extended to provide interest and colour all year round.

It was good to see the continuing growth of pavement cafes. Surrounding these with small trees, shrubs and flowers in containers, as seen on the continent, would both enhance the customers' dining experience, and make a major impact towards making the central area more attractive for all

Section B

Find opportunities for greater bio diversity in the centre, and interpret what is happening to aid understanding and respect e.g. wild flower border adjacent to murals at private Broad Street car park. Increase the development and interpretation of local heritage through further art and planting. Good examples exist but considerable scope remains

Section C

At future judgings it would be helpful to clarify how the partners in this BID entry are able to influence each other at policy making level. Consider how the BID's vision could more overtly express the aim of attracting more customers through the enhancement of the city centre landscape. Start future tours with a 15 minute presentation and produce a unified portfolio reflecting the achievements and future plans of all those involved in the entry, as they relate to the judging criteria

A: 56 B: 60 C: 36 Total: 152