

Congratulations on having entered the 2009 East Midlands in Bloom Competition!

East Midlands in Bloom is the regional competition of 'Britain in Bloom' and has been running for over 30 years. The campaign focuses on three core pillars of horticultural achievement, environmental responsibility and community participation. It has a dedicated team of experienced committee members and judges most of whom are horticulturally qualified and members of the RHS. They give their time voluntarily to give advice to entrants and are available for the judging period during the first half of July.

East Midlands in Bloom will have a New Entrants Workshop in February 2010 to which everyone is welcome to attend. It will be held in Rosliston, Derbyshire. More details will be available later in the year. Please also visit our website:

www.eastmidlandsinbloom.co.uk

The Committee and Judges thank you for making superb efforts to the 'Bloom' Campaign this year and wish you all the best in 2010.

CRITERIA

- SECTION A Horticultural Achievement 50% of total marks
- SECTION B Environmental Responsibility 25% of total marks
- SECTION C Community Participation 25% of total marks

CATEGORY AWARDS

There are five grades of award:-

1. Gold – marks 85% & above (170- 200 points) Outstanding

This is awarded to exceptional achievers who have demonstrated a consistently high standard in all areas of the judging criteria and objectives of Britain in Bloom

2. Silver Gilt - 75-84% (150-169 points) Very Good

This is awarded to an entrant who has met the judging criteria and objectives with a very high standard throughout, and has in one or more areas been exceptionally thorough. This award has the potential to achieve a Gold Award in the future.

3. Silver – 60-74% (120-149 points) Good

This award is for an above average entry, and has met most of the judging criteria and objectives for Britain in Bloom and has displayed the potential to progress to Silver Gilt Award

4. Bronze – 50-59% (100 – 119 points) Average

This is a commendable entry meeting the sustainable standards required, and has the potential to progress to Silver Award.

5. Certificate of Achievement – 0-49% (0-99 points) Fair

This is a fair entry aiming to meet the sustainable standards required, and has the potential to progress to Bronze Award.

SMALL CITY

General Comments

The category this year has reached a new peak in terms of numbers of entrants and we are pleased to say that the entries viewed indicates that there is quality as well as quantity present. We were able to view excellent community activity and splendid partnership working, showing that the new judging criteria have been taken on board in a positive manner. We are confident that all the entrants can develop further.

Judges – Jeff Bates and Debbie Scott

GRIMSBY: Gold Medal Award – 174 points

Judged on 14th July 2009

***Judges Award: Grimsby** – Community participation, exemplified by Your Place, West Marsh and Weelsby Allotments amongst many others

A lovely morning greeted the judges for this visit to a new entrant to the East Midlands in Bloom campaign, and this allowed the community every opportunity to show off all the preparatory work that has been taking place over the past two years leading up to the day. It was abundantly clear that this community-based entry has fully engaged with the local authority, city centre, business community and many other partners to have a transformational impact on the area, enabling the judging tour to visit both affluent and regenerating areas with equal enthusiasm. The sheer enjoyment that came through was inspiring, and we wish to congratulate everyone involved in making us feel so welcome in all areas seen.

Judges: Debbie Scott and Jeff Bates

The judges were particularly impressed by:

SECTION A

- The quality of the horticulture on view was superb, whether in the many floral beds on roundabouts, in the Peoples Park, outside the Grimsby Institute and other high profile areas; in the astonishing run of planters along the A180 main gateway to the city; the new barrier baskets; the hanging baskets throughout the pedestrian areas; but also in the community led areas such as Your Place and West Marsh community gardens and the many private domestic gardens seen.
- The remarkable work along Chelmsford Avenue, where the Neighbourhood Watch group have worked to make the verges so floral; the lovely planting and containers on Abbeygate Precinct; the splendid allotments – with the MIND allotment at Weelsby particularly notable - or perhaps the amazing gardens at the Fire Station, everywhere we looked demonstrated quality of the highest order.
- The restoration of Peoples Park is splendid, where the cooperative work with the Grimsby Institute is an excellent innovation and the enthusiasm of the Friends Group a real motivational force. We were also most impressed with the new 'grass' roundabout, already looking very attractive and which will certainly create a great impression in future years.

SECTION B

- We were impressed with the work being done at the Strand School and at the allotments to encourage biodiversity and wildlife; the plans for the future at the Saltings are also impressive and will hopefully in due course become part of the judging tour.
- Overall impressions of cleanliness were very positive in all areas visited, with no significant issues of litter, fly-tipping or dog-fouling seen. The positive impacts viewed and described of the work with juvenile offenders and Community Payback were good.
- We must make especial note of the originality of the street scene in Victoria Street, where the paving, seating and particularly the lighting columns make clear links with the Fishing Heritage of the city, and also of the quite stunning – and hilarious! –work taking place at the Community Recycling Site at Gilbey Road.

SECTION C

- There is really too much here to list, so clear is it that community engagement across the whole spectrum is so evident. Highlights have to be the work with schools and children as seen and also in ideas such as the Wheelbarrow gardens; the marvellous community gardens at Your Place and West Marsh; the business engagement as exemplified by the Millfields Hotel and the wall of colour at Cables Taxis; the Weelsby Allotments... the list is endless. A remarkable achievement, and one which clearly brings pleasure to all those involved, whether those for whom it is a job (the owner of Cables Taxis, Sharon Hunt at Newlincs Waste Management), the volunteers such as Malcolm Sargent at the allotments, or all the members of the coordinating team, where we must mention Ernie and Jacqui Brown in particular.
- Media engagement, with the local newspaper and local and regional television following the tour at all stages, was superb.

Areas suggested for future development:

SECTION A

- It is exceedingly difficult to suggest anything here, as all that we saw was so good. There may be scope to further the theme of sustainable planting on some of the roundabouts in the future, but given the outstanding treescape throughout the entry and the splendid rose beds and well-maintained shrubberies everywhere this is not essential.
- You may consider reviewing the tour to allow more time to view some areas – the St James Church grounds springs to mind – but otherwise please continue what you are doing so effectively – transforming your community through the medium of gardening and horticulture. A final point would be to undertake some weed control on the approach road to the (remarkable) Recycling site.

SECTION B

- Again there is little to suggest to improve upon. Perhaps you might consider structuring your portfolio to describe your work on biodiversity, litter picks and other aspects within this section of the criteria, and how these aspects are clearly linked into the Bloom efforts, but otherwise once again keep up the splendid standards.

SECTION C

- Genuinely in this section there is nothing to add – it is a model of community participation. You may wish to revisit your tour planning a little to try to take some of the 'rush' out of it, making better use of the portfolio to demonstrate some aspects, but otherwise, a marvellous example of working together for the benefit of all.

A=85 B=42 C=47 TOTAL 174

MANSFIELD: Gold Medal Award – 170 points

Judged on 17th July 2009

***Judges Award:** Mansfield – Management of conservation and biodiversity at Oak Tree Heath

Rather variable weather was unable to detract from the quality of this experienced entrant, where the displays of floral colour in the town centre were complemented well by natural areas such as Oak Tree Heath. Community activity was evident in the Friends Groups that were active in the parks and in the excellent work being done with schools. The support of the local authority was strong, with Executive Mayor Tony Egginton present throughout the tour. It is clear that pride in the community is high and that future plans are in place to continue the strengthening of the positive impacts of the Bloom.

Judges: Debbie Scott and Jeff Bates

The judges were particularly impressed by:

SECTION A

- The quality of the hanging baskets and tiered, self-watering planters throughout the town centre and prestige areas was high, with grouping of containers giving a boost to the impact. Bedding in Titchfield Park has been given height by the introduction of raised planting.
- Big improvements are present in the area to the front of Gala Bingo and in the new Betula planting on West Hill Way. Many good residential front gardens were viewed e.g. along Chesterfield Road, Rose Lane and in particular the marvellous garden of Mr and Mrs Marshall. Many florally enhanced pubs were seen e.g. The Pheasant, the Foxglove, and also churches such as the Bethel Chapel in Mansfield Woodhouse.
- The treescape was splendid throughout and was seen to good effect from the high ground in Carr Bank Park. Retail areas such as the new Asda car park are well landscaped.

SECTION B

- The management of the natural areas – in particular the Maun Valley Park and Oak Tree Heath – is exemplary; this is being taken into schools, as seen in the visit to Wynndale Primary School, and parks, with the wildflower meadow in Carr Bank.
- Excellent recycling and resource use were seen with the completely peat-free nursery and the recycling of all green waste, including chipping for mulch of tree prunings; we also noted that the new tiered planters are less demanding on water as compared with those they replaced. There was little long-term litter seen and only minor instances of dog-fouling and graffiti.
- The public art in the town centre, including 'High Heels' and 'Aspire' are prominent features, and most of the street furniture was in good condition.

SECTION C

- We were pleased to see that the levels of sponsorship are being maintained despite the difficult financial situation, and that support in kind – e.g. through the splendid Friends Groups – is valued greatly.
- The schools continue to be a great link into the Bloom, with the Titchfield Park flowerbed continuing to be designed – and also planted – by the pupils from King Edward Primary School. Children's involvement was also clear at Peafield Park, and that of adults at Slant Lane community allotment garden.
- Ongoing activity includes the extensive bulb-planting in many areas and the regular litter-picks and other work at Peafield Park, Oak Tree Heath and other areas.

Areas suggested for future development:

SECTION A

- Weeds were a significant detraction from the appearance of a number of areas, notably beneath almost all tiered planters in the pedestrianised areas of the town and throughout Sainsbury's landscaping and that of St Peters Retail Park; we appreciate that the weather has been challenging but there is a need to deal effectively with the extensive annual weeds under the planters and the established woody weeds in shrubberies, which included ash seedlings several feet high on many occasions. We also noted that the hedges in Carr Bank Park had not been trimmed – and that the visit was well after the embargo for the bird-nesting season.

SECTION B

- The overgrown site adjacent to Action for Employment detracts badly from the street scene in that area; if possible the owners should be contacted to have this dealt with. Having said above that there was little long-term litter, we do request that you deal with the rubbish beneath the shrubbery on West Hill Way (as seen when travelling to the Miner Statue).
- The other area that is in need of attention is the painting of the gates at the entrance to Carr Bank park, which let down the quality of the work inside the park. Here, a tree trail would add greatly to the value of the site, where most visitors are probably unaware of the extensive arboricultural heritage that is presented to them.

SECTION C

- Whilst the parks clearly benefit greatly from Friends Groups, we are aware that you now are getting Neighbourhood groups to become active in residential areas, and would encourage you to continue this process so that they enter EMiB as Neighbourhoods in their own right and also become part of the Bloom tour next year.

A=81 B=45 C=44 TOTAL 170

OADBY & WIGSTON: Silver Gilt Medal Award – 166 points

Judged on 13th July 2009

♥Green Space East Midlands Award for Horticultural Excellence within Parks:

University of Leicester Botanic Garden

♥Britain in Bloom 'Local Roots' Award: Oadby and Wigston – for multi-cultural involvement across all faiths, engaging all people in the Bloom project, spearheaded by Gerald Gardiner

The community based approach to this experienced entrant shone through from start to finish of a well-structured and carefully considered tour, enabling many excellent areas within the Borough to be shown to the judges on a lovely summer's morning. Progress is evident in many aspects of the entry, with highlights being the Cromwell Tools World Distribution Centre, the University Botanic Gardens and Brocks Hill Environment Centre – but most of all the sense of total participation and enjoyment amongst the many people we met during the tour.

Judges: Debbie Scott and Jeff Bates

The judges were particularly impressed by:

SECTION A

- Numerous areas of colourful and thoughtful horticultural practice were seen, with the highlights being the University Botanic Gardens, the planters and baskets at the Parade and the much improved Sensory Garden and Carpet Bed in the Peace Memorial Park. The treescape throughout the borough is most attractive, with the huge potted Betulas on the Parade being a great move forwards. We were pleased to note the added barrier baskets of colour, as suggested by last year's judges and also the effective grass and verge management.
- Permanent planting was seen to good effect in the community gardens at Wickham Road and Canon Close, as well as Cromwell Tools; the splendid allotments and developing garden at Waterleys Primary School are also noteworthy.

SECTION B

- A wonderful section, with particular highlights being the Environment Centre at Brocks Hill, the wildlife pond at Cromwell Tools and the overall superb levels of cleanliness throughout the areas visited.
- Efforts to manage waste effectively and to reduce peat and environmental demands are also very positive.

SECTION C

- Outstanding community involvement throughout the entry, which continues to develop and grow, taking in more areas within the Borough and involving more people and groups each year. As ever, the Breaking the Barriers Team are star performers, but now joined by the residents in Wickham Road, Canon Close and Garden Close, the Friends groups in the Parks and Brocks Hill, the allotments groups and the whole-community activities such as the multi-faith group met at the Parade as part of the tour.
- Sponsorship from the Business community is good, with effective support also from Rotary and good partnership work with the County Council.
- Local press support is good and there is no doubt that the Pride in the Borough initiative is known by everyone.

Areas suggested for future development:

SECTION A

- This is now clearly a strength of the entry; nonetheless there is scope to continue the progress in the quality of horticultural practice seen in municipal areas, as well as the advancement of the growth of some of the baskets and planters viewed, which lacked a little maturity when seen.

SECTION B

- There is little negative to comment on here other than some graffiti along Shackerdale Road. For future development there is scope to further enhance the 'wildlife' aspects to the school garden at Waterleys, and perhaps to allow more time to view Brocks Hill (perhaps by dropping the tour of the recycling facility at Wigston Road?).

SECTION C

- Very little to note under this heading; perhaps to make more obvious the efforts to raise business sponsorship and also to try to raise the profile on local radio.

A=78 B=43 C=45 TOTAL 166

CHESTERFIELD: Silver Gilt Medal Award – 158 points

Judged on 17th July 2009

♥ **Best School Garden** – Spire Nursery & Infant School, Chesterfield

♥ **Best Hotel/Pub garden or display** – Ringwood Hall, Chesterfield

Chesterfield with its splendidly unique Church spire is always welcoming, even given the dismal weather they faced on judging day. The clear impression of the visit, however, is that the commitment of a range of partners, led by the Town Council, is bringing great progress to the Bloom campaign and as a consequence the general ambience of the town. One of the memorable moments amongst the experiences of the day was the spontaneous burst of horticultural lyrics from the Crematorium Manager!

Judges: Debbie Scott and Jeff Bates

The judges were particularly impressed by:

SECTION A

- The Crematorium and the Ringwood Hall grounds are both fine credits to the town and to their management and staff – well done.
- Good evidence of community effort at the Peter Webster centre, with the young mums and their families, and with the residents at Pevensey Green who continue to develop the area experimenting with different styles of planting around the trees on their open space.
- The community groups we saw who work in other areas such as Holmebrook Valley Park and Edinburgh Road have made a tremendous impact on their own areas in physical appearance and community spirit.
- The spectacular floral displays, barrier troughs, baskets and 'daleks' throughout the town centre certainly brightened up the dreary wet weather and complemented the efforts of individual premises such as the Market public house and the off-the-beaten track Shambles area.
- Sustainable planting was very much in evidence too, especially in the Peace Gardens and the refurbished Queen's Park.
- The horticultural efforts and enthusiasm shown by Valerie and her teams of young gardeners at Spire Infants are absolutely exemplary.

SECTION B

With the Church spire and the ancient market being such central features in the town, the obvious links were there. Although it was the end of a market day, the usual market detritus was well under control as the traders packed away.

- It was good to see the spire reflected in the imaginative hanging basket brackets on shop fronts and the Rosewall sculpture was in a fine setting alongside 'Future Walk', a well used pedestrian and cycle route
- There has obviously been a greater effort put in to reduce the weeds, detritus and litter mentioned by the judges in 2008 – well done.

SECTION C

- Excellent engagement with schools evidenced through Spire Infants' gardening efforts and the schools banners project which made an effective link between the schools, the Bloom and the commercial side of the town as the schoolchildren were able to visit the printers and watch their banners actually come off the 'press'.
- Successful gardening competitions supported by an impressive range of sponsors
- It was interesting to see the work going on to link the business area of the former Bryan Donkin site to Queen's Park as a linear green space and the excellent use of Section 106 money to fund Bloom related initiatives.

Areas suggested for future development:

SECTION A

- Difficult to suggest areas for improvement for Chesterfield in terms of horticultural achievement, but there were occasional sightings of weeds and dead heads, but these were few and rare. There may be scope to introduce more colour and variety in the industrial areas in the future.
- Try to incorporate one of the splendid residential gardens shown in the portfolio into the Judges' tour. We also recommend that a visit to one of your award winning allotment sites is included in the tour in the future.

SECTION B

- Please ensure the judges are provided with detailed evidence of the resource management aspects of the entry (B2 above), either as part of the tour or in the portfolio.

SECTION C

- Continue to engage with all sections of the community, schools, residential and commercial areas; the re-invigoration of the Neighbourhoods (Pevensey Green, Edinburgh Road and more) would greatly benefit progress in this section of the criteria.

A=82 B=36 C=40 TOTAL 158

LOUGHBOROUGH: Silver Medal Award – 144 points

Judged on 13th July 2009

***Judges Award:** Loughborough – The tremendous promotion of Loughborough in Bloom by the Loughborough Echo

It was good to welcome Loughborough back to the Bloom this year and see the tremendous efforts that the town has made towards 'bringing back the Bloom'.

Working together, the big partners like the University and the Loughborough Echo have joined the Borough and County Councils and community groups to forge a strong Bloom presence.

The weather on the day was only slightly marred by a sharp shower whilst we were at the Crematorium but that didn't spoil the visit.

Judges: Debbie Scott and Jeff Bates

The judges were particularly impressed by:

SECTION A

- We saw substantial evidence of new planting on roundabouts and verges, as well as the floral displays brightening up Epinal Way and Ashby Road, including work on the verges by the University, the beautifully maintained Crematorium gardens and the splendid beds and planters in Queen's Park
- The sustainable planting was well developed on roadsides and on the University site including the carbon offset tree planting.
- It was good to see even the small players getting involved in the Bloom, such as the gardeners at the John Storer House.

SECTION B

- The Outwoods site was a great example of sustainable practice with Wilson, the working horse, doing his part both to help the environment and to be a visitor attraction in his own right. A well used area by walkers and birdwatchers, the site has also been made very accessible for disabled users through the provision of the Trampers. It was good to see the Stonebow Meadows being used spontaneously by groups of children.
- Queen's Park provides a lovely setting for the historic Carillon Tower and is a popular recreation facility for all ages, with an active Friends Group
- There was little evidence of litter and the town centre was well kept.
- The public art in the town centre celebrating the hosiery industry and the athletics depicted near the University campus add character to the town.

SECTION C

- Excellent press coverage and a great campaign headed by the Loughborough Echo. The portfolio gave clear indications of the future developments planned by Loughborough in Bloom, who are obviously intent on building for future success.
- The involvement of the imaginative Knitters Group and the various Friends Groups is to be applauded.
- The ongoing local authority support is encouraging and initiatives through the Press, the Town Centre Partnership and the emerging BID complement it well.
- The displays of artwork brighten up the empty shops

Areas suggested for future development:

SECTION A

- Some of the floral bedding was perhaps a little thin even in the main parks; perhaps this could be reviewed in future years. The judges were anxious for the survival of the heathers on the roundabout – hopefully the plants will survive the winter saltings.

- Try to develop the route to show more evidence of a spread of business involvement and also so that more good examples of residential gardening can be seen.

SECTION B

- The All Saints Church project has got off to a flying start and the judges are looking forward to seeing it as it moves towards completion.
- Whilst we were impressed by the general environmental quality on view we also recognise that there is further progress that can be made to 'up' the instant impact in this respect.

SECTION C

- Continue to develop partnership working as part of the entry. The judges would also recommend further enhancement to the judging tour to show more areas of the city and to avoid the amount of repetition that took place.
- You may wish to consider involvement in the Neighbourhoods campaign as a means to energise more areas, and thus at the same time increase the areas which can be viewed as part of the tour.

A=69 B=39 C=36 TOTAL 144

LINCOLN: Silver Medal Award – 125 points

Judged on 14th July 2009

***Judges Award:** Lincoln – Continental Landscapes for their positive and effective resource management

This is Lincoln's second year since their return to the Bloom campaign and the focus was clearly on the work of the City Council and its contractor, Continental Landscapes Ltd. A beautiful and often under-rated Cathedral City, Lincoln has a lot to offer its residents and visitors. The relatively new University has brought an influx of younger people to the City and this has had a big impact on the City Centre and in particular the evening economy.

The historic Bailgate area links neatly with the more modern shopping centre down Steep Hill, which, along with the steeply sloping Arboretum and the grounds of the Usher Gallery, proves conclusively that there are hills in Lincolnshire.

Judges: Debbie Scott and Jeff Bates

The judges were particularly impressed by:

SECTION A

- The barrier baskets along Broadgate were a cheerful sight on a busy stretch of dual carriageway, as were the planters fixed to the pedestrian bridge.
- The take-up of commercial sponsorship of hanging baskets and planters, with subsidy from Lincoln BIG, is encouraging in these difficult economic times.
- The Peace Garden in the St Mark's retail development provides an oasis of sustainable planting in an otherwise busy shopping centre.
- The immaculate Cathedral lawns are a perfect foil for the historic building.

SECTION B

- It was good to see evidence of the appreciation of biodiversity and natural habitats at Hartsholme Park and the woodcarvings at Birchwood reflecting the area's wildlife and history
- Continental Landscaping's composting record and use of rainwater for watering and domestic use set good examples to residents and businesses.

- The pavements were generally clean, benefiting from the thorough annual gum cleaning.
- Artworks such as the Empowerment sculpture are spectacular features in the city centre

SECTION C

- Obviously a good partnership between the Council, Lincoln BIG and Continental Landscapes in bringing in sponsorship for the floral displays; the Council's investment in the projects is to be applauded.

Areas suggested for future development:

SECTION A

- The judges felt that the formal beds in the Arboretum and the Temple Gardens, although they were in good condition, could do with being slightly more densely planted to improve the impact at close quarters.
- One particular rosebed in the Arboretum was well overdue on the deadheading, letting down the otherwise well maintained gardens.
- The grass slopes in Temple Gardens are obviously still proving tricky for the lawn-mowing team, but it's a shame to spoil such a magnificent area for the sake of a bit more care.
- A small number of weeds spoilt the paths through the Sobraon Barracks development – also perhaps consider introducing some colour into this area

SECTION B

- The judges would like to have seen more links with the heritage explained, for example the lamp posts in the Bailgate.
- Consider including representatives from other organisations / departments on judging day to help reinforce the impact of others' work on the overall life of the City.
- Continue with the development plans for Hartsholme Park

SECTION C

- The judges felt that Lincoln's cake needed a little more icing, perhaps; more evidence of community involvement, more engagement with business groups and in particular the local press would enhance the promotion of your Bloom efforts and help enthuse the rest of the City. It is essential that these points are addressed if the Bloom initiative is to become sustainable and if addressed, we are confident that the benefits to the community will be immense.

A=70 B=29 C=26 TOTAL 125

CITY

General Comments

With Derby not entering this year Northampton is the only entrant in this class. As it turned out it would have taken an exceptional entry to deny Northampton glory.

Judges – Frank Constable, Barry Bedford and Geoff Spate

NORTHAMPTON: Gold Medal Award – 174 points

Judged on 10th July 2009

★**Judges Award:** Northampton – St Andrew's Hospital; for the maintenance of its attractively landscaped grounds

♥**Countryside Companions Award for Best Wildflower and Conservation Area:**
Bradlaugh Fields, Northampton

The judges were welcomed the moment they emerged from the reserved car parking and were immediately escorted to a civic reception in the Guildhall. From that moment on they were constantly aware of the supreme effort made by all involved ensuring that the day was as near perfect as could be. The city is to be congratulated for its commitment to the Bloom and it's all embracing community and environmental activities.

The judges would like to thank the Mayor, Councillors and officers and specifically Richard Gold for the courtesy extended to them.

The judges were particularly impressed by:

SECTION A

- Floral features in the city centre which play a major part in establishing civic pride.
- Allotments and community gardens which are flourishing and well supported.
- The city's many fine parks and green spaces.

SECTION B

- The city's local nature reserves and its programme of activities involving children in environmental awareness. The value of these schemes and the enjoyment of the children were witnessed firsthand by the judges.
- The standard of street furniture in the city which was smart, clean and well maintained.
- The cleanliness of the city and low levels of litter even though judging took place on a busy market day.

SECTION C

- The high level of community participation in horticultural and environmental projects. These included (Friends) groups, teams of adults with learning difficulties, children and volunteer groups from businesses.

Areas suggested for future development:

SECTION A

- Continue with your wide ranging activities and high standards.

SECTION B

SECTION C

A=84 B=45 C=45 TOTAL 174

COASTAL RESORT

General Comments

Judges – Doug Stacey and Jo Tarrant

CLEETHORPES: Gold Medal Award – 173 points

Judged on 7th July 2009

***Judges Award: Cleethorpes** – For the creative landscape design at the terminus island of the Cleethorpes land train

Despite facing changes in the 2009 marking systems involving both gains and losses in various sections of the entry, Cleethorpes emerged overall with an outstanding performance meriting the award of prestigious Gold Medal. The influence of Cleethorpes in Bloom is bringing many improvements for residents and visitors, clearly encouraging a justified sense of pride in the town. This was evident throughout the tour and very much enjoyed by the judges.

Judges: Doug Stacey and Jo Tarrant

The judges were particularly impressed by:

SECTION A

- Overall a very high standard of horticulture was being achieved with many improvements made in the response to previous judging comments. The Greenways into Cleethorpes are superb, thanks to the well tended trees, hedges and grass verges, matched only by the excellence of the various displays along Sea Road which are full of interest. It was noted that Haverstoe Park has gained Green Flag park status.

SECTION B

- Areas of wildlife importance have been identified and are managed in the interest of conservation and increasing biodiversity. Many are being successfully protected by the achievement of appropriate scheduling e.g. SSSI's and LNR's. The innovative development of Pier gardens as a wildlife area for the local schools is particularly commended as is the high standard of cleanliness throughout the town.

SECTION C

- It was pleasing to see the good displays by many private residential gardens, hotels and guest houses plus business premises. The important support of the Grimsby Telegraph in helping to stimulate this involvement. It was also very encouraging to see direct community participation at Sea Road and to read in the portfolio of more direct contributions at Daubney Street, Barcroft and Crowhill Avenue. The sponsored double Decker "Bloom Bus" is a great way to raise awareness of the campaign.

Areas suggested for future development:

SECTION A

- Consider further sub-tropical style of planting eg Phormiums amongst the Cordylines along High Cliff Road. Also continues the programme of replacement planting in the tired shrubberies with well designed mulched planting schemes. Encourage improved maintenance of ground cover planting at Cinema/ retail park frontages and use a higher proportion of trailing plants in container to improve overall impact and container coverage. Plus consider the use of more colour coordinated planting schemes across the town.

SECTION B

- As a way of future increasing biodiversity consider areas where different mowing regimes could be implemented. Also continue to extend facilities for interpreting both local and natural heritage. Work towards a unified design of street furniture throughout the town.

SECTION C

- Changes in the judging criteria sharpen the focus on community participation, therefore encourage greater direct involvement of volunteers in planting and other projects across all age groups and throughout the year. Include example of these contributions in future judging tours.

A=89 B=43 C=41 TOTAL 173

MABLETHORPE: Silver Medal Award – 146 points

Judged on 7th July 2009

***Judges Award: Mablethorpe** – The very attractive memorial rose garden, conceived, funded and planted by volunteers from the local community

Significant improvements were evident in Mablethorpe's entry compared to last year. Organisation and community involvement have improved. There is a sense that the whole community is increasing its support for the Bloom Campaign and the effect of this can be seen on the ground. It is a progressive entry which will gain future success if current enthusiasm, direction and effort is sustained. Well done Mablethorpe – you can take great pride in the positive changes you have been able to make to the town and if similar levels of improvement are achieved in the next 12 months a Silver gilt should be within your grasp.

Judges: Doug Stacey and Jo Tarrant

The judges were particularly impressed by:

SECTION A

- Several horticultural achievements have been made over the past year. Particularly noticeable was the planted boat display outside the Cross Guest House at the main entrance to Mablethorpe. An improved quality of planting at "The Pullover". Very good permanent landscaping at the Golden Sands Caravan park. High standards of maintenance at Queens Park and the completion of the community inspired Memorial Rose garden.

SECTION B

- The Judges were impressed by the transformation of the sea view car park, the excellent Blue Flag Beach with its attractive Beach huts... The overall high standards of cleanliness, the intergenerational graffiti art displays and the environmental initiatives at the Holivans Caravan park.

SECTION C

- The Judges were impressed by the committed leadership of Mablethorpe in Bloom and the partnership arrangement between volunteers, local authorities and other agencies. Also the forward planning evidenced by future plans for the development of the seafront. The contribution made by the allotment presentation, the vision team and the Butterflies and Bees project were commendable.

Areas suggested for future development:

SECTION A

- Consider a scheme of tree planting along Quebec Road; possibly informal grouping of Pines and Holm Oaks, interspersed with a few silver Birch and under planted with spring bulbs. Start on the boundary of the car park adjacent to The Beck and in the space between the road and the drainage channel facing Sherwood field. Plant background screen planting to the memorial rose garden to obscure the rear of the Fire Station. Consider taking Horticultural advice on the appropriate design, scale and impact of the floral displays in the central retail areas.

SECTION B

- On future judging tours arrange for someone to be present to explain how the town's natural resources are managed and interpreted. Also more information on the Beach management and recycling practices in the town would also be helpful.

SECTION C

- Consider additional means of fundraising e.g. open gardens scheme. Additional sponsorship from commercial outlets such as the caravan parks. Where possible involve children with their projects on future judging tours.

A=72 B=37 C37

TOTAL 146

URBAN COMMUNITY

General Comments

There were three entrants in this category, Littleover being a first time competitor in the Bloom. The pleasing feature in each case was that they were all led by local community groups and that there appeared to be good support in the community for their efforts.

Judges – Frank Constable, Barry Bedford and Geoff Spate

SPONDON: Silver Gilt Medal Award – 158 points

Judged on 14th July 2009

***Judges Award:** Spondon - The Wastefields Allotments for their exceptional neatness and high productivity

Spondon Springs Back. That was the theme of Spondon's entry into this year's competition. It was evident that the Bloom group had retained all the skills and enthusiasm that they had developed in previous years. Having been warmly welcomed and supplied with refreshments the judges were entertained with a slick IT slide show of Bloom/community activities. Throughout the display the "Spondon Shopping Bag" supporting a cleaner, greener Spondon appeared in photographs taken around the world as distant as the Sidney Opera House and the Statue of Liberty. An excellent portfolio restated their terms of reference as set out in 2002 and recognised the disappointment of many in the community of their break from formal competition in 2008.

This was a very competent entry from a capable and enthusiastic team. The judges would like to complement them on their achievement.

Judges – Frank Constable, Barry Bedford and Geoff Spate

The judges were particularly impressed by:

SECTION A

- The production of their own bedding plants.
- The splendid Wastefield Allotments.
- The maturing sensory garden.

SECTION B

- The West Park Meadows Nature Reserve.
- The high level of recycling achieved with help from the City Council.

SECTION C

- The commitment of the Bloom team and the support from the community in what is clearly a year round programme of activities.
- The teachers and children at the village's schools in embracing gardening and environmental related activities.

Areas suggested for future development:

SECTION A

- Consider being a little more adventurous on the choice of plants for floral displays.
- Look at creating greater impact and interest. Attention to quality and content of planting schemes will pay dividends.

SECTION B

SECTION C

A=75 B=41 C=42

TOTAL 158

WARSOP: Silver Medal Award – 140 points

Judged on 7th July 2009

♥East Midlands in Bloom Committee Award: Church Vale School, Warsop

The judges arrived a few minutes early but the members of Warsop in Bloom were ready and waiting together with a smart new minibus. The vehicle we learnt was provided by the local Rotary and was made available for community use. The theme of care in the community and care by the community recurred time and again throughout the tour. The judges were welcomed warmly at every venue and were left with the feeling that Warsop would be a comfortable place to live. We thank you for getting our judging season off to such a good start.

Judges – Frank Constable, Barry Bedford and Geoff Spate

The judges were particularly impressed by:

SECTION A

- The provision of horticultural features at public buildings and key locations.
- The amount of support by the public in maintaining gardens at residential care homes and publicly owned buildings.
- The extensive provision of public open space, much of it created from the reclamation of land despoiled by coal mining.

SECTION B

- The provision and protection of bio-diversity at the two SSSI and much naturalised open space.
- The provision for recreational activities within the open space network.
- The renovation of the war memorial.

SECTION C

- Year round activities of voluntary groups in maintaining open space areas and various horticultural features throughout the area.
- The exceptional and imaginative use of gardening and the environment in all aspects of children's education at Church Vale School.

Areas suggested for future development:

SECTION A

- A considerable number of marks could be gained by giving closer attention to horticultural standards where floral displays are provided.

SECTION B

SECTION C

A=64 B=39 C=37 TOTAL 140

LITTLEOVER: Silver Medal Award – 126 points

Judged on 14th July 2009

***Judges Award:** Littleover – Littleover Lane Allotments for the management of this large and complex allotment site

This is Littleover's first entry into East Midlands in Bloom and they were understandably tentative as to how their presentation would be received. It was clear however that they had done much homework in planning their activities. They had made contact with various organisations and kept a record of their activities. Their achievement of a silver medal recognises the breadth of their entry in embracing all aspects of the bloom competition and should give confidence to all those involved to aim for greater things in years to come.

Judges – Frank Constable, Barry Bedford and Geoff Spate

The judges were particularly impressed by:

SECTION A

- The floral features in the Half Moon Pub garden.
- The maintenance of the grounds of St Peter's Church and cemetery and of Burton Road Methodist Church.
- The extensive Littleover Lane allotments, their museum and the general management of the site.

SECTION B

- The involvement of the wild life preservation society to advise on the maintenance and development of the grounds of the village hall.
- The activities of individuals and the support of the community in establishing tree preservation orders on land earmarked for development.

SECTION C

- The shop window display competition as a means of raising awareness of the bloom campaign.
- The close contact with schools to involve children in the natural environment. The commitment of individuals and the group as a whole in bringing the community together to ensure a successful first time entry into East Midlands in Bloom.

Areas suggested for future development:

SECTION A

- Continue to work with local businesses to ensure the widest possible support for the Bloom competition. Specifically encourage the Half Moon Pub to replace their frontage display with "natural" plants.

SECTION B

SECTION C

- Identify sites for potential improvement as part of a long term plan. Be adventurous with your use of plants. Be persistent if first time efforts are not successful.

A=60 B=34 C=32

TOTAL 126

URBAN REGENERATION

General Comments

Leicester was the only entrant in the Urban Regeneration class this year but the scale of the works that have been, or are being, carried out over a period of about five years is phenomenal – in the region of £3 billion. The scale of the works would put it in a class of its own even if there were to be other contenders. The judges were privileged to be witness to so many ambitious projects.

Judges – Frank Constable, Barry Bedford and Geoff Spate

LEICESTER: Silver Gilt Medal Award – 157 points

Judged on 16th July 2009

The judges were received at “Curve”, Leicester’s new performing arts centre in the heart of their Cultural Quarter. With what is claimed to be the world’s most hi-tech theatre and built at a cost of over £50 million the judges were quickly brought up to speed on the extent of Leicester’s ambitions.

Leicester is hosting the 2009 Special Olympic Games and have linked that event with their Bloom activities under the marketing banner “Growing for Gold” which together with colour coded floral displays was evident throughout the tour.

The judges were particularly impressed by:

SECTION A

- The introduction of permanent plants to the bed by the Council Offices to introduce a more sustainable element and a more exotic appearance.
- The very clean and tidy St George’s churchyard, an area which had apparently been much abused in previous times.
- The planting of trees in pedestrianised areas. The trees being of sufficient maturity to give immediate visual impact.
- The topiary athletes giving a link between the Bloom and the Special Olympics.
- The attractive Castle Gardens.

SECTION B

- The waste management policies of the Council including the recycling of almost all waste collected in the city centre.
- The city’s wardening scheme by which teams of wardens constantly patrol the city centre to ensure that street furniture is kept clean and presentable, litter is removed and offenders are brought to book.
- The high standard of permanent landscaping throughout the city centre including the use of granite paving to unify many pedestrian areas.

SECTION C

- The partnership approach towards the Bloom initiative involving the Chamber of Commerce and many individual businesses.
- The initiative to give the Bloom competition maximum publicity including a live interview with the judges on Radio Leicester.

Areas suggested for future development:

SECTION A

- Although recognising that much of the work throughout the city centre is still ongoing the judges felt that the floral impact of hanging baskets and planters was limited. This was perhaps due to the species used, quantities and maturity of plants.

SECTION B

SECTION C

A=73 B=42 C=42

TOTAL 157