

CITY

Electoral population 100,001-200,000 (Judging time 3 hours 30 minutes)

General Comments

The judges were warmly welcomed by Council Dignitaries who were very supportive of the In Bloom campaign. The judges were shown relevant high quality projects which have obviously improved from last years visit and were still gaining momentum for further progress.

Northampton benefits from substantial support for the campaign from businesses, groups and the public in general, which was evident throughout the tour. Northampton continues to be an outstanding entry and a pleasure to visit.

Judges – Jeff Bates and Sharon Thomas

Northampton Gold Award and Category Winner –171 points

Judged 6th July

* Judges Award:

George Howard and the outstanding work of the Castle Environmental Group

The judges were particularly impressed by:

SECTION A

The seasonal planting was of very good quality and had been extended to enhance key areas. The judges were particularly impressed with the partnership working between the Town Centre Business Improvement District and their contribution to the In Bloom campaign. The grounds of St Andrews Hospital are outstandingly good and could be considered for Best Commercial premises in the future. The judges appreciated the tree cover in the town and the superb mature specimens in parks. The standard of dedication and good horticultural practice at Abington and Delapre Park were inspirational and should be commended. The progress in the IYN entry, Castle Environmental Group, under its' inspirational, hands-on leader George Howard, is excellent, with the addition of the range of raised beds for food growing great to see.

SECTION B

The commitment of the Bradlaugh Fields volunteers was evident with ongoing projects to further improve the barn area. The town centre and along the tour route was very clean and generally free of litter. The project at the Lings to improve access will encourage increased use, and encourage less able bodied visitors to enjoy nature. The introduction of the public realm teams to remove graffiti etc will undoubtedly improve environmental quality.

SECTION C

The excellent partnerships which have developed with countless community groups, not least the Town Centre Partnership, the Friends of Delapre Abbey Park, Bradlaugh Fields, Abington Park and neighbourhoods etc have created long term sustainable improvement which Northampton will benefit from for years to come. Very good partnerships working exists with the media and businesses

Areas suggested for future development:

SECTION A

Ensure the tree replacement programme progresses this winter, especially in Abington Park where the harsh winter and very dry spring have taken their toll.

SECTION B

Incidents of graffiti and fly posting were seen on occasion along the tour, and weeds in paving and outlying planters were also noticed which detracted from some very good features. Street furniture around the town centre will benefit from the repainting project mentioned on the tour. It would be beneficial to meet a Wildlife Trust representative to give information about maintenance regimes to encourage diverse habitat.

SECTION C

This section is very strong so keep up the good work.

A=88 B=38 C=45 TOTAL 171