

COASTAL

LARGE COASTAL (Electoral population 12,001 and over; Judging time 3 hours)

General Comments

The initial deluge as the tour began, coinciding as it did with the open-top bus tour, slightly dampened our enthusiasm; however, this was temporary in every sense, as the day brightened up and the commitment of everyone we met raised all our spirits. Wonderful horticulture was complimented by community involvement, with a 'can-do' attitude to the fore everywhere. The outstanding SSSI and RAMSAR natural coastline was a new inclusion on the tour, which was greatly appreciated. Cleethorpes continues to go from strength to strength.

Judges – Jeff Bates and Sharon Thomas

Cleethorpes Gold Award and Category Winner –184 points

Judged 7th July

*** Judges Award:**

Artwork and sculpture on view throughout the resort

*** East Midlands in Bloom Trophy for the Least Littered Environment**

Cleethorpes

The judges were particularly impressed by:

SECTION A

Gold standard horticulture was on display everywhere. Bedding was in full flower, interesting in styles and entirely appropriate for the location; the dahlias were superb for so early in the season. Great improvements in maintenance were noted at the Cinema complex. The new sustainable planting at Isaacs Hill roundabout is good, complimenting the sculptures well; roses are becoming established at the Memorial Hall. All permanent borders are mulched well. The maze is now established and in excellent condition. We were pleased to see the tremendous progress being made at the Children's Centre, with so many groups involved in gardening and outdoor activities throughout the year. The loss of all the established cordylines in the past winter is hardly noticeable, so well has replanting taken place. We are also impressed with the excellent standards of grass maintenance throughout the tour. The gated alleyway is looking better than ever, with excellent use of recycled materials in the continued developments there. The Pier Gardens, including the Beacon Hill Allotment area, are excellent.

SECTION B

A remarkable effort in all respects. Almost too much to mention! However, we must note in particular the sculpture on Isaacs Hill Roundabout, the mural on hoardings at the old Winter Gardens, the chance to meet the artist (Rachel McWilliam) at the Dolphin sculpture, see art being created at the Haversnack Cafe as we were there; the quality of all the street furniture in the town is very high, with almost all having been renewed or restored, and that little which is left programmed for similar treatment. The town is near pristine in terms of dog-fouling, graffiti, fly-posting and litter, and the streets are free of weeds in paving and difficult areas. The beautifully clean 'Blue Flag' beach is a proud focal point for the resort. An excellent presentation by the NELDC recycling team is supported by on the ground evidence of re-use (old tyres as planters at Glebe Road) and recycling (everywhere mulched with chipped bark or green-waste as appropriate). Interpretation boards are everywhere, and all are clean, stylish and consistently informative; the children's duck feet trail of event sites is excellent. Nature conservation is given a high profile, with improved management practices developing better habitats in the Country Park and island, many bird boxes present and used throughout the town, the wildlife garden on the Pier Gardens adopted by a local school, and a visit with Mike Sleights to the outstanding tidal flats with the sea lavender coming into flower.

SECTION C

The Bloom is all-encompassing in Cleethorpes; the increase in IYN participation, more schools involvement, the inclusion of virtually every aspect and group in what takes place, with high public awareness and support at all levels of the local authority, is an example to all of the benefits that Bloom brings to a community that embraces it. The initial presentation, although slightly late in getting underway, showed that Bloom is an all-year-round campaign and that you have as many plans for the future as you have to maintain the past successes. So much of your work is sponsored (and is evidenced on the tour and in your excellent portfolio), and there is continued press support

at a high level. You have successfully engaged with business partners, a range of public sector bodies and all parts of the community.

Areas suggested for future development:

SECTION A

Could the Beacon Hill allotments be visited as part of the tour, and perhaps also a cemetery? These are the only aspects missing from a remarkable display of horticultural diversity and excellence. You may also recall that last year the recommendation was to extend the use of sub-tropical shrubs; the winter of 2011 proved too much on this occasion, but hopefully that is an extreme event and we still feel that judicious increases to permanent planting should continue; the Isaacs Hill Roundabout is an excellent example.

SECTION B

We recommend that urgent dock-pulling takes place in the Haverstoe Park nature area. This was also one of only two places on the entire visit where there was evidence of dog-fouling. Having said that street level weeds are absent, from the open-top bus tour there are a few areas of 'balcony' weeds visible that you should encourage the owners to deal with.

SECTION C

Difficult to suggest anything in this section other than to continue to develop as you are doing. We particularly support IYN and schools developments and anticipate that these are capable of further growth, building on the expertise built up in reserve now; these may become increasingly self-supporting, as each IYN group partners and assists new groups to grow and prosper.

A=92 B=45 C=47 TOTAL 184

COASTAL

SMALL COASTAL (Electoral population Up to 12,000; Judging time 2 hours 30 minutes)

General Comments

The visit to the popular Lincolnshire resort began, for the first time, at the excellent allotment site, where new Mablethorpe in Bloom Chairman Graham Parkinson introduced the summary of what the tour will include and pointed out some of the activities that have taken place over the past year. The tour, led by Graham and Karen Froggatt, Town Centre Manager, showed evidence that the new Bloom partnership is taking effect and is strongly considering means to drive progress in the Bloom initiative in the Town. We were pleased to meet many of the Bloom volunteers and activists at the Guiders HQ at the end of the tour, and to see that continued support of East Lindsey DC is evidence with the presence of the Leader of the Council.

Judges – Jeff Bates and Sharon Thomas

Mablethorpe Silver Award –140 points

Judged 7th July

* Judges Award:

The stunning, highly productive allotments and the work of Pat Locke at that site and elsewhere

The judges were particularly impressed by:

SECTION A

There are some notable horticultural successes evident in the Town, with, as always, the garden and bowling green at Linkage Green being outstanding. The displays were established, colourful and extensive, and surrounded the most beautifully presented bowling green we have seen this year. We also were very impressed with the quality and extent of the allotments, where Pat Locke was able to show the extensive and rapid development of the site, which, even with 80 plot holders, still has a waiting list. Other notable horticultural positives are the rose borders in Queens Park, the pole baskets in the town, the containers at the Conservative Club, the “unusual” containers at Apollo Garage and the lovely town entrance planting adjacent to Cross Inn (whose own gardens continue to be splendid). Another notable success story is the much improved planting, all mulched, at Lidl. The Cemetery was tidy and well-maintained. We were also pleased to note the extension of the kniphofia / lavender planting at Seaview, as recommended following last year’s tour – it is very striking now.

SECTION B

We were able to view the new ‘bug hotel’ at Holivans, where it is clear that the enthusiasm of Kelly Rowland and her father to manage the sustainable environment there is as strong as ever, with the use of heat recovery to reduce energy use a recent activity. The Dune stabilisation programme is continuing successfully and fully supported by National Partners including English Nature. Natural conservation areas are establishing at St Mary’s Park and the natural meadows at the Business Park are attractive; as noted earlier the Railway Walk is developing well as a conservation park. Bird boxes are placed in sites at the Tennyson High School. Composting is well established at the allotments and is also being demonstrated at the Seal Sanctuary. The murals on the sea wall are cheerful, and we appreciated the art in the landscape at Railway Walk

SECTION C

Congratulations on achieving almost every aspect of last year’s recommendations! The Bloom group is developing and renewing, with a good range of partners involved and great enthusiasm from the Chairman and support from the Town Centre Manager. We are pleased to note the increased business support; the visit to the school was a first and shows considerable potential for the future; this can also be said of the Harris Boulevard project.

Areas suggested for future development:

SECTION A

Whilst we were pleased to see some mulching taking place in borders within Queens Park, this is limited; there are many weeds present throughout these and other permanent plantings and we would encourage you to extend the use of bark chippings and green waste to improve soil conditions and minimise weeds. Try also to deal with the brambles in Queens Park shrubberies before they become unmanageable. We are impressed by the potential of new developments at

Railway Walk and Harris Boulevard, and encourage you to do more of this. Railway Walk is the more established feature, and provides a quiet, green linear park along the site of the old railway line; we suggest that you consider the use of ornamental grasses as suitable plants for the centre feature in the 'turntable' there. The successful pole baskets prove that containers can be good in the town; however, the 'thin' barrier baskets on High Street and dead 'hay racks' at the Pull Over both severely detracted from the overall ambience; try to enquire how the successes are being achieved and then repeat that everywhere else.

SECTION B

As noted last year, weeds are a problem in many areas, there is a major issue with dog-fouling – especially in and around Queens Park – and there is some graffiti around; litter and detritus are prominent in the dykes everywhere. Try to target one area for success in these regards, and then gradually extend the influence. We are impressed with the shop front renewal scheme; you could also consider murals or children's paintings, or similar, on vacant premises.

SECTION C

We are still convinced that the route can be improved; a number of the points noted as strengths in the report are ones that we saw in passing. They deserved greater prominence. In particular, we feel that you should include the Nature Conservation aspects prominently on this important coastal site. Continue to include the school, but please ensure that on the next visit there is direct involvement of the children, to confirm their involvement with the environmental initiatives talking place. Try to get the press engaged in your activities; this would potentially be the best way to raise the profile of the Bloom and the many benefits it brings to your community. As we discussed on the visit, we are happy to provide an advisory visit, where we would be able to advise in detail on what we consider to be good practice and means by which you could develop other areas.

A=68 B=34 C=38 TOTAL 140

COASTAL

LARGE COASTAL (Electoral population 12,001 and over; Judging time 3 hours)

General Comments

It is only the second year of Skegness' participation in the Bloom, but it is clear that it will not be the last and that the potential to make rapid progress is clearly in place. The Skegness Partnership has taken up the reins of leading the Bloom initiative, and the tour, led by Town Centre Manager Stefan Krause and ELDC officer Gary Spence was designed to demonstrate both existing strengths of the entry and also areas that are the focus of imminent development. A typically bracing day allowed the judges full opportunity to see the widening range of activities taking place. Well done!

Judges – Jeff Bates and Sharon Thomas

Skegness Silver Award –140 points

Judged 18th July

* Judges Award:

The work of Matthew Partridge and other HOPE volunteers at Witham Lodge and elsewhere in the resort

The judges were particularly impressed by:

SECTION A

We were very pleased to see that you have quickly taken on board our comments from 2010 with regard to planning a route to best show off what is taking place in the resort, and that you have begun to grow the participation of businesses and the community, and breadth of horticultural activity in Skegness. We particularly commend the efforts of hotels and guest houses, including the Ocean Court, County, Savoy, Quorn and Clarence, and the colourful Highwayman public house. It was good to see effective landscaping at Tesco. Frearson Solicitors has striking, fully established hanging baskets. The Jolly Roger crazy golf is once again bright with buddleia and makes excellent use of Tracycarpus. As ever, Compass Gardens demonstrate striking bedding displays, but also the excellent grass and foliage planting. This planting style is also in use on Castleton Boulevard, where it looks attractive in the breeze and is appropriately low maintenance. The Rose Garden adjacent to Compass Garden is bright and cheerful. Tower Esplanade includes the tubs with Betula and bedding, and established, effective planting of Whitebeam as street trees. Numerous excellent residential front gardens were observed en-route, notably opposite Seacroft Golf Course, on Ida Road, Richmond Drive and Seacroft Drive.

Mention must be made of the community vegetable garden at Witham Lodge – only begun earlier this year and splendid! The credit must go to Matthew Partridge in particular for all his efforts.

SECTION B

The visit to Gibraltar Point Nature Reserve was inspirational; the new developments in the woodland area will add to the interest and diversity of the already remarkable site, which Dave Miller of Lincs Wildlife Trust explained so effectively. We were also pleased to note that LWT have been involved in the work on dune management to the North of the main bathing area. It is hard to miss the off-shore renewable energy at Skegness, but we were also pleased to note that X-Site has its own wind-generated energy. Given the footfall observed, and that we visited on a Monday morning after a very busy weekend, the town showed very little litter. Graffiti was also at a fairly low level. We concluded the tour at the Village Church Farm open-air museum (unfortunately on its' closing day) and were extremely pleased to see the quality of the heritage orchard, natural woodland garden, sensory garden and other areas, all run by volunteers. Local heritage was dramatically demonstrated at the lovely site.

SECTION C

Well done for establishing the Skegness Partnership, with 'Bloom' one of its key objectives. This is very much the approach we indicated in last year's judging report. The Sea View Walk is perhaps the prime example of practical, on-the-ground achievement so far, and a remarkable effort it is! Local resident Paul Marshall ably described to us the work that has taken place, and the wide range of groups involved in it, including Community PayBack, the HOPE volunteers from the Salvation Army residential hostel at Witham Lodge, local residents, business supporters and guidance and help from the Wildlife trust and the Environment agency. The Target newspaper has been very supportive of

your efforts to get the Bloom established as a vehicle to raise the profile and standard of the Resort. We are also pleased to see the first 'In Bloom' portfolio, which can now be the basis for further development.

Areas suggested for future development:

SECTION A

The Tower Gardens is in a very prominent location, and when the adjacent building works are complete, will be overlooked by a 'coffee terrace'. This makes the improvement to the Garden something of a priority. We recognise that there are cost implications! We do feel that the bandstand should be a focal point in the Garden, and could benefit from summer perennial planting immediately around it; the woodland areas should be kept to low shrubs and evergreen perennials. Castleton Boulevard is an excellent planting scheme that will be further enhanced by removing the remaining bedding containers and extending the grasses (these can be lifted and divided); add a splash of colour with more Crocosmia and the addition of Echinacea, Rudbeckia and Verbena bonariensis. Continue to move the remaining birches to the Pavilion Playing Fields area. Try to establish the barrier baskets somewhat earlier; by mid-July there should be a full top and reasonable trail visible.

SECTION B

Whilst we were impressed by the overall cleanliness in the resort, there is a definite issue of dog-fouling to be addressed. The problem greeted us almost at the beginning of the tour, and attention needed to be paid to where we were walking at a number of locations thenceforth. We suggest a local promotional campaign through your excellent newsletter and also by developing local Neighbourhood action groups. The unusual styling of the seats in Tower Gardens and elsewhere is another example of local heritage; the small amount of vandalism that took place over the weekend is unfortunate, but should not prevent you scheduling a complete restoration of the furniture as time and budget allows. The boating lake is a difficult challenge – but also a huge and wonderful opportunity. Could a model boating activity be established there as an appropriate diversification and excellent spectator opportunity?

SECTION C

Try to get the press directly involved on the day – there is no better way to raise the profile! Consider visiting a school with a gardening group (or other young person's activity), and also an allotment site, on the tour in future. Establish a 'best hotel / guest house' aspect to your 'in bloom' competitions

A=75 B=35 C=30 TOTAL 140