

LARGE TOWN

Electoral population 12,001-35,000 (Judging time 2 hours 30 minutes)

General Comments

The profile of the Bloom continues to grow in Belper. As a resident or visitor it would be difficult to remain unaware of its' benefits. Its' success is attracting greater participation by the whole community guided by the Belper in Bloom committee. We were particularly impressed that the committee chose a local heritage bedding theme this year, depicting the historical industry of Belper. This was an adventurous decision, but was very well executed with associated interpretation panels.

Judges – Richard Tomlinson and Doug Stacey

Belper Gold Award and Category Winner –176 points

Judged 13th July

*** Judges Award:**

the residents of Meadow Court

The judges were particularly impressed by:

SECTION A

A very wide range of outstanding horticultural features were viewed across all aspects of the judging criteria. We were particularly impressed by the innovative designs of flower beds incorporating Belper's industrial heritage. There was also a large number of business premises with floral displays. We were impressed by the high standards achieved by the elderly residents of the Meadow Court complex in their lovely gardens and floral displays.

SECTION B

Particularly impressed with the extremely good wildflower meadow and the proposals for its extension. The comprehensive interpretation of Belper's local history to residents and visitors right across the town.

SECTION C

The undoubted enthusiasm of the whole Bloom Committee, all of whom have meaningful responsibilities to support the Bloom initiative. The excellent level of Bloom awareness existing in the town brought about by the active cooperation of the local press, door to door leafleting, the references on the Town Council website and the effective networks existing with other organisations.

Areas suggested for future development:

SECTION A

Endeavour to show the judges a wider range of private dwellings. We were sorry to see the detrimental effect of the winter damage to Beaurepaire Gardens and look forward to the restoration of its' previously high standard.

SECTION B

Arrange a permanent interpretation sign for the Coppice car park wildflower border. Whilst recycling arrangements are good, a clearer explanation of trends and achievements would be helpful.

SECTION C

Continue to use all means available to increase participation and awareness of the Bloom's aims.

A=89 B=43 C=44 TOTAL 176

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General Comments

Due to financial restrictions Harborough in Bloom was under serious threat of closure at the end of March this year. Subsequently a grant was offered by the local authority allowing its' Bloom volunteers the opportunity to take over the responsibility for this year initially. Now known as Market Harborough in Bloom Volunteers (MHBV), this group has courageously accepted the challenge, organising its' activities with great energy, enterprise and enthusiasm. We were truly astonished by the exceptional commitment shown by all those involved, and the incredibly high standards achieved.

Judges – Richard Tomlinson and Doug Stacey

Market Harborough Gold Award –171 points

Judged 15th July

* Judges Award:

the Market Harborough in Bloom Committee

* East Midlands in Bloom Award for the Best Public Park

Welland Park, Market Harborough

The judges were particularly impressed by:

SECTION A

Despite the loss of direct local government involvement we were hugely impressed that MHBV has taken up the responsibility for significant new floral displays in the town and parks, and at short notice has managed to retain very high standards. Given the disruption to services it is astonishing to see yet further improvements to the facilities and standards in Welland Park. The high standards of floral displays at the Three Swans and at the Railway Station.

SECTION B

We detected a high level of civic pride and environmental responsibility e.g. excellent recycling, good conservation and presentation of local heritage. We were encouraged to see the importance of the Arboretum being increasingly recognised both locally and nationally and commend the school and committed volunteers involved in its management. We were pleased to see that Sedum roofs are being established on bus shelters.

SECTION C

The courageous decision to take up the responsibility for the Bloom at such short notice. The impressive commitment and determination of so many volunteers ensuring that the high standards of this entry are maintained.

Areas suggested for future development:

SECTION A

The present local authority grant is achieving excellent value for money. We note your intention to produce plants in the glass houses to restore the former street displays, therefore giving even better value for money for the Council's grant and tenancy of the buildings. It is hoped your present arrangements with the council will continue at least at the present level. We noted the intention to provide a Crazy Golf Course in the park – a formidable challenge - but highly commendable!

SECTION B

Consider enlisting the expertise and cooperation of volunteers from the County Wildlife Trust in the management of your wildlife areas. We suggest you consider elements of Market Harborough's history in the creation of your floral displays to generate further interest for those enjoying the beauty of the town.

SECTION C

Strive to regain the business sponsorship lost by the disruptive changes this year and use to enhance the impact of floral displays in the High Street.

A=88 B=39 C=44 TOTAL 171

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General Comments

It was refreshing to see real action underway to significantly reduce carbon emissions in Spalding over the next 2 to 3 years. Waste minimisation and recycling continue to receive priority attention. Good environmental management of the River Welland and the Coronation Channel greatly enhances the green infrastructure, and also provides an attractive route to the splendid Springfields complex by water taxi. The floral impact in The Crescent area initiative stands out amongst many good floral displays, adding to the pleasure of a visit to this attractive town.

Judges – Richard Tomlinson and Doug Stacey

Spalding Silver Gilt Award –157 points

Judged 11th July

* Judges Award:

For the initiatives taken by traders in providing high quality floral displays in the Crescent, Francis Street and Vine Street area

The judges were particularly impressed by:

SECTION A

The further expansion of high quality floral displays in the Crescent, Francis Street and Vine Street area demonstrating increased commitment to Spalding in Bloom by local businesses. The horticultural excellence being achieved at Springfields creating a beautiful attraction for residents and shoppers.

SECTION B

We applaud the programme to reduce carbon emissions and the very good arrangements for recycling. Conservation and wildlife of the River Welland, Coronation Channel, and Vernatt's Local Nature Reserve was being well managed.

SECTION C

Considering the difficulties caused by the economic conditions it was pleasing to see more businesses committing to the Bloom by floral displays and/or sponsorship.

Areas suggested for future development:

SECTION A

Care should be taken to avoid a decline in the standards of the beautiful Ayscoughfee Hall Gardens – a 'jewel in Spalding's crown'. Ensure that a good range of residential gardens are seen on future judging tours by encouraging residents to engage in Spalding in Bloom. Increase the impact of the Hall Place containers by raising the soil levels. This will make the flowers more visible, especially if cascading varieties are used at the edges.

SECTION B

The overall appearance of the town would be improved by more effective weed control of pavements and channels; also by improved litter control in Enterprise Way.

SECTION C

Continue to encourage and provide opportunities for businesses and residents to play an active part in the Bloom.

A=78 B=39 C=40 TOTAL 157

LARGE TOWN

Electoral population 12,001-35,000 (Judging time 2 hours 30 minutes)

General Comments

An enjoyable tour of Sleaford included visits to recent improvements not viewed before. This longstanding entry has, to its' credit, completed a wide range of desirable projects which hugely benefit the town and its' community spirit. Acting as a catalyst for environmental improvements, the Bloom networks effectively with a range of other groups which share common aims. We particularly commend the imaginative regeneration projects reflecting Sleaford's history, and the sheer hard work involved in this community approach.

Judges – Richard Tomlinson and Doug Stacey

Sleaford Silver Gilt Award –153 points

Judged 11th July

*** Judges Award:**

the Barge and Bottle

The judges were particularly impressed by:

SECTION A

The high standards of residential gardens at Westgate Park. Superb displays provided by a number of local businesses and voluntary organisations including the Carre Arms Hotel, Barge and Bottle, Interflora, and the New Life Church.

SECTION B

The continuing priority given to reflecting local heritage in projects e.g. Rauceby Banks. Continuing interest in the promotion of conservation and wildlife.

SECTION C

We were pleased to see the excellent coverage of your activities in the local press, and their presence on the judging tour.

Areas suggested for future development:

SECTION A

Continue to encourage the increase in floral displays provided by local businesses. We commend Sleaford in Bloom for producing its own floral displays, but suggest that growing arrangements are made to obtain earlier maturity of plants bedded out, to justify your effort in production. We think that the New Life Centre car park could be enhanced, without detriment to parking provision, by a few carefully placed trees to break up the large expanse of tarmac.

SECTION B

Whilst we did not observe much litter, some weed growth in pavements and channels was evident.

SECTION C

Encourage youth and voluntary organisations to play a more active part, to further boost the strength of your Sleaford in Bloom committee. Restore the Open Garden Scheme in 2012 as a fund raiser. Consider more active promotion of the Best Front Garden Competition.

A=72 B=42 C=39 TOTAL 153

LARGE TOWN

Electoral population 12,001-35,000 (Judging time 2 hours 30 minutes)

General Comments

Ilkeston's small but enthusiastic management team, well supported by its' political leadership, is taking a forward- looking approach to the Bloom. Adapting sensibly to reduced resources, it continues to give some priority to the Bloom because it is of benefit to the whole community. It is engaging more widely with numerous volunteer groups, and this approach promises a positive future.

Judges – Richard Tomlinson and Doug Stacey

Ilkeston Silver Gilt Award –151 points

Judged 7th July

* Judges Award:

The Spanish Bar, South Street

The judges were particularly impressed by:

SECTION A

It was pleasing to see very significant improvements to Victoria Park, including a complete redesign and replanting of the long herbaceous border. Some good examples of business entries in the Erewash in Bloom competition, including the Spanish Bar Beer Garden, The Poacher, and Whirls, all in South Street. With the help of Friends, the Stanton Road Cemetery has been transformed into a place of rest and tranquillity, a haven for wildlife and provides a valuable local history resource.

SECTION B

The combination of Bring Sites and kerbside collections is producing a commendable recycling of waste. There have been significant improvements in street and park furniture including aspects of local heritage. It was good to see a widespread use of mulches in shrubberies.

SECTION C

The extent of the work in local schools, and the justifiable pride of the children as they explained the achievements of the Hallam Fields Junior Eco School. The development and support given to existing and emerging Friends Groups.

Areas suggested for future development:

SECTION A

A large proportion of the seasonal planting was late, and somewhat immature. Arrange earlier planting of well developed plants, and more cascading plants in the Market Place basket trees. Encourage major retailers e.g. Co-op, and small businesses to help increase the floral impact in central focal points such as the Market Square and South Street.

SECTION B

If the vacant site of the former toilets is to remain undeveloped for a while, consider more pleasing screening. Some seating provision in the Stanton Road Cemetery is desirable despite the risk of misuse. It is suggested that this should be trialled.

SECTION C

Confirmation of local press interest and support would be strengthened by their attendance at future judging visits. Continue to widen participation in Ilkeston in Bloom by varied community groups e.g. youth organisations, churches, Rotary, also considering their involvement in the Bloom steering group.

A=72 B=41 C=38 TOTAL 151

LARGE TOWN

Electoral population 12,001-35,000 (Judging time 2 hours 30 minutes)

General Comments

Long Eaton's small, but very enthusiastic and committed management team is adapting well to financial restraints by continuing to find more efficient ways of delivering services, including the successful encouragement of voluntary help. Presentation of highways was excellent, also the floral impact at The Green. Further targeting of similar improvements at other strategic locations e.g. the Market Place with complementary displays provided by both the Council and local businesses will strengthen the entry. It is very good that a Bloom group has been formed. Partnership working with a group representing all parts of the community will bring increasing benefits.

Judges – Richard Tomlinson and Doug Stacey

Long Eaton Silver Gilt Award –150 points

Judged 13th July

*** Judges Award:**

the restoration of the Long Eaton Cemetery Chapel, the approach roads, avenue and entrance gates

The judges were particularly impressed by:

SECTION A

Very good floral displays on The Green, benefiting from the new barrier baskets. The excellent floral displays and gardens at the Alexandra Nursing Home. The well designed herbaceous beds in West Park and the high standard of displays in the Library Grounds.

SECTION B

We were impressed by the street cleaning regime producing a high standard of cleanliness and weed control with a similar standard of presentation of grass verges. The excellent range of environmental facilities at the Long Eaton School inspiring the interest and education of children. The renovation of the Long Eaton Cemetery Chapel and associated access road.

SECTION C

We were encouraged by the establishment of the local Bloom Committee and the positive involvement of several groups in helping achieve the aims of the Bloom.

Areas suggested for future development:

SECTION A

We would like to see more floral displays provided on business premises, especially targeting The Green and the Market Place to complement the public displays. We feel you should develop the excellent idea of encircling The Green with further barrier baskets. Tired shrubberies in West Park would benefit from a gradual replacement programme and under planting with groundcover plants.

SECTION B

When finance permits, the presentation of parks would be improved by a footpath resurfacing programme. Try to encourage the owners of Home Bargains and its' neighbouring properties to achieve more attractive and tidy frontages.

SECTION C

Continue to widen the Bloom Group to include businesses, local residents and voluntary organisations. It would be helpful to have the presence of the press at future visits, which will demonstrate their interest and involvement.

A=76 B=37 C=37 TOTAL 150

LARGE TOWN

Electoral population 12,001-35,000 (Judging time 2 hours 30 minutes)

General Comments

Newark is a lovely historic market town that has much to commend it. We believe that if future entries are designed to ensure that good examples of all the judging criteria are covered, significant improvements in the standard of award will result and the town's environment will benefit further.

Judges – Richard Tomlinson and Doug Stacey

Newark Silver Award –121 points

Judged 4th July

*** Judges Award:**

the Magnus School Special Needs Group (supported by the Eton Avenue Growers Association)

*** East Midlands in Bloom Best Hotel / Pub Garden, sponsored by the Art Department**

The Grange Hotel

The judges were particularly impressed by:

SECTION A

We were impressed by the standard of the town's Green Flag parks and open spaces enhanced by high quality park furniture and footpath surfacing. The very good presentation and maintenance of the town's large cemetery including helpful interpretation facilities in the chapel. The school's initiative in engaging young people with special needs is highly commendable. Also the outstanding efforts of Mary and Glenys in creating the attractive community gardens at Howes Court. The innovatively designed and beautifully maintained gardens at the Grange Hotel are outstanding.

SECTION B

It was pleasing to see further developments and wider voluntary involvement in the Hawton Holt Wildlife Area. The attention paid to the effective presentation of local heritage at the Sconce, Castle and Town Cemetery was commendable.

SECTION C

The commitment of the Eton Avenue Growers Association to the encouragement of gardening amongst Special Needs groups at Magnus School, and in the community is impressive.

Areas suggested for future development:

SECTION A

Consider how the Best Front Garden Competition might be restored by involving sponsors and the local press. Include some good quality residential gardens on the judging route. Consider Howes Court as a separate entry into the Its Your Neighbourhood category. Encourage wider business participation in the Town Council's sponsored flower basket scheme.

SECTION B

Seek the help of the local authorities and communities in reducing the level of litter and weed growth on the town's highways. Ensure that a higher profile is given to resource management issues in the portfolio and on the judging tour e.g. recycling.

SECTION C

It would be helpful to have a constituted group of helpers representing different sections of the community each taking responsibility for different aspects of the Bloom. At future judging visits present the involvement of your many volunteers in a more coordinated way.

A=66 B=28 C=27 TOTAL 121

LARGE TOWN

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General Comments

The judges were hugely impressed with the obvious progress made since the last assessment in 2010. The establishment of the Gainsborough in Bloom group at the beginning of the year is already proving a success. There is ample evidence of vision, energy and planning involving people with a range of skills. There is clearly a foundation laid for future success especially related to the Business Improvement District Project currently being developed.

Judges – Richard Tomlinson and Doug Stacey

Gainsborough Bronze Award –115 points

Judged 12th July

* Judges Award:

the Friends of the Old Hall Medieval Manor

* East Midlands in Bloom Trophy for the Most Improved Entrant

Gainsborough

The judges were particularly impressed by:

SECTION A

Impressive design, amount and quality of seasonal and permanent planting at the major Marshalls Yard shopping centre. The appropriate planting of period style gardens at the Old Hall and the involvement of Friends in this work, and in the production of a garden guide. The superb presentation and management of the Showfield Allotments.

SECTION B

Good reflections of local heritage in the Old Hall, Marshalls Yard, Tractor Roundabout and the Riverside Walk.

SECTION C

Establishment of a lively and energetic Gainsborough in Bloom Group. The engagement of the Queen Elizabeth High School Gardening Club. The level of sponsorship - financial and 'in kind', achieved in a short time.

Areas suggested for future development:

SECTION A

Continue to improve roadside features in strategic locations within the town e.g. Roseway area including toilets, Methodist Church, Horse and Jockey Public House, Post Office, and screen planting of the car park. Individual projects could be phased as part of a comprehensive improvement scheme. Consider producing a management plan for Richmond Park as a prerequisite for an application for a Heritage Lottery Fund grant of major renewal.

SECTION B

Consider providing opportunities for memorial benches in All Saints Churchyard. Strengthen your entry by seeking the involvement of those with conservation and wildlife expertise.

SECTION C

Greater involvement of the local press. This might also help promote local competitions e.g. Front Gardens. Expansion of Gainsborough in Bloom to include more organisations and interested residents.

A=55 B=29 C=31 TOTAL 115