

Britain in Bloom North West Information Pack





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Britain in Bloom North West Information Pack

Welcome to Britain in Bloom North West.

Britain in Bloom run by the Royal Horticultural Society (RHS) is the largest horticultural campaign in the UK. Its purpose is to encourage community participation that has horticulture at its heart.

Each year groups in various categories are invited to enter the competition. In the summer months, North West in Bloom assessors visit the groups to see the work that has been carried out. They assess their entry against the RHS criteria but they also provide constructive feedback and suggestions to help the group improve. The results of the judging and the dedication of all involved are celebrated in an Awards ceremony at the end of the year (dependent on Covid restrictions).

Britain in Bloom is divided into 16 regions of which **North West Britain in Bloom** is one of the largest and most proactive groups. It covers Lancashire, Cheshire, Greater Manchester and Merseyside.

Each region has a Regional Organiser and for the North West the contact details are as follows:

Contact Details

Regional Organiser
Britain in Bloom North West,
Rural Business Centre,
Myerscough College,
Bilsborrow, Preston,
Lancashire, PR3 0RY

Tel: 01995 642101

E-mail: info@northwestinbloom.co.uk

Website: <http://www.northwestinbloom.com>

Facebook: North West in Bloom Support





Why get involved?

There are so many benefits to entering Britain in Bloom. Here are just a few local examples of how 'In Bloom' can make a difference.

Cleaner and greener surroundings and public places

Chorley Involved uniformed groups **e.g.** Guides and Scouts in litter picking.

Example Various 'Friends of Parks' groups in the local parks help out with activities **e.g.** litter-picking.

A sense of common purpose and pride for a community

Altrincham Primary schools sowed vegetable seeds. These were harvested by the Bloom group and used at the local luncheon group.

Poulton A community garden is used by different groups to plant and harvest.

Safer environments with a reduction in anti-social behaviour



Example Activities that create respect for their area **e.g.** Working with Young People's Service and Youth Offenders teams.

Fleetwood Local school children look after public displays.

Regeneration of run-down areas and a positive effect on local economy



Bury A local school took over a disused bowling green and turned it into a wildlife space with raised planters, bug hotels and flowers for pollination.



What does an 'In Bloom' group do?

Most groups organise a range of events and activities that involve local people, the town or parish council (or Local Authority), businesses, community groups and volunteers with the 'In Bloom' initiative. Many 'In Bloom' campaigns support **It's Your Neighbourhood** (IYN) groups in their area as a way of boosting community engagement and supporting wider activities. Where there are no existing IYN groups, the 'In Bloom' group may wish to support the establishment of new ones.

IYN is the non-competitive level of Britain in Bloom designed for small volunteer groups that are 'greening up' a specific area. It is free to enter.

Each 'In Bloom' group will focus on relevant local initiatives and, therefore there can be great variation in the activities that take place.

Activities could include:

- Caring for public spaces e.g. parks**
- Educating and inspiring the community**
- Bulb and tree planting**
- School / youth projects**
- Wildflower meadows or wildlife habitats**
- Cleaning up, litter picking / street furniture and signage**
- Greening grey and disused spaces**
- Conservation areas**
- Feature floral displays**
- Community engagement activities**
- Environmental initiatives / recycling projects**
- Health and Well-Being Initiatives**
- Social Prescribing**



Many groups throughout the region are linking with health and wellbeing initiatives including recruiting new volunteers through social prescribing. For more information check out the link:

<https://www.england.nhs.uk/personalisedcare/social-prescribing/>



How to start a new group?

Step 1: Develop your committee

Some groups are led by volunteers, others by Local Authorities. They may involve local businesses, schools, Councillors, resident groups, council staff, gardening / allotment groups, conservation / heritage groups. Some groups are a partnership of some or all of these.

There is no one size fits all but it is important to involve as wide a range of people as possible in your committee to get the best community involvement when organising your local campaign.

Step 2 Put together a constitution and an action plan

A **constitution** sets out what you hope to do and how. It will help everyone stay clear about the groups' aims. It may also be needed if you want to apply for funding.

The **action plan** is a list of practical activities and timescales in order that you can achieve your goals in the constitution.

Step 3 Tell your local community

It is important to raise local awareness

- Tell your Local Authority or town / parish council if they are not already involved. Local Councillors will be able to reach a wide range of people in the community
- Publicise your activities **e.g.** leaflets, local paper, talks, posters in local shops, libraries, community centres, churches, village halls
- Hold community meetings
- Approach local housing and residents' associations. They may already have their own IYN groups or may wish to form one
- Involve local traders, pubs, hotels
- Use social media to engage with the various groups involved

Step 4 Develop a fundraising plan

This may include

- fundraising events
- securing sponsorship
- applying for grants
- approaching the Local Authority

Note: See Support Section for more help with fundraising.

A Sample Constitution can be found in the Appendix.



How do I enter?

To enter the competition is very simple. Blank entry forms can be found on our website <https://www.northwestinbloom.com> These should be completed and submitted to the Regional Organiser by the deadline date, usually the end of March. The group can enter the competition for as many years as they want or they can take a year out and re-join later.

What category should I enter?

Many different groups take part in Britain in Bloom. Below are the core categories that are available in all the Regions of the RHS Britain in Bloom competition.

CATEGORY	ELECTORAL ROLL NOs
Large City/MBC	over 200,001
City	100,001 - 200,000
Small City	35,001 - 100,000
Large Town	12,001 - 35,000
Town	6,001 - 12,000
Small Town	2,501 - 6,000
Large Village	1,001 - 2,500
Village	301 - 1,000
Small Village	300 and under
Small Coastal Resorts	0 - 20,000
Large Coastal Resorts	20,001 and over
Urban Community	2,500 and over
Town/City Centre	-
Business Improvement District (BID)	-
Local Authority Parks Large	-
Local Authority Parks Small	-
Pocket Park	-

All entry forms can be downloaded from our website:

<https://www.northwestinbloom.com>

What is the cost of entering a Core category?

The cost of entering varies with each category. For details of costs and how to pay please see North West in Bloom entry form.

Privacy Notice

I am aware that for the purposes of Britain in Bloom and IYN my data will be shared with the RHS and stored and processed in compliance with the General Data Protection Regulation. For more detail see our website: www.northwestinbloom.com



In addition, North West Britain in Bloom has its own categories to encourage smaller groups to get involved.

North West Britain in Bloom Category	Size
Hotels / Public Houses / Restaurants	
Large	20 rooms or above
Small	Less than 20 rooms
Tourist Attractions/Visitor Centres etc	
Large	25 Acres and above
Small	Less than 25 Acres
Retail/Commercial/Industrial Parks etc.	
Large	25 Acres and above
Small	Less than 25 Acres
Caravan Park	
Hospital	

What is the cost of entering as a Commercial category?

The cost of entering varies with each category. For details of costs and how to pay please see the North West in Bloom Commercial entry form.

<https://www.northwestinbloom.com/rhs-bib>

Note: If you feel that your group does not fit any of these categories it may be that you are better entering the It's Your Neighbourhood Competition for which there is a separate support pack.

IYN entry forms can be downloaded from our website:

<https://www.northwestinbloom.com/rhs-iyn>



What happens when?



January - March

Invites sent out to enter the competition
Completed forms returned to Regional office by end of March



April - June

Judges are assigned to each entry
By mid May, the Judges contact groups with a date and time of the assessment



July - August

Judging takes place across the North West
Results are collected and winners and awards decided



September - October

Invites to the Awards Ceremony are sent out
Tickets are allocated to each group



November - December

Awards ceremonies take place
Reports are sent out to each group



Preparation for the Judging day

'In Bloom' groups are visited each summer by expert judges who assess their achievement and provide constructive feedback.

Remember The 'In Bloom' campaign should consider the entire community not just the high street or village square. Every part of your route is subject to judging including the places you stop and the places you pass through between stops. If there are problem areas, there should be plans in place to show how these will be improved.

Remember the judges are interested in the impact your efforts have made over time and plans for the future. The activities should be sustainable and benefit the community in the long term.

The **Judging Itinerary and map** for the day should be developed by the 'In Bloom' contact and sent to the judge prior to the day. It will show the judging route and the scope of your activity. The judges will expect to be accompanied by a maximum of four people, each of whom should be competent to answer questions.

Note: If yours is a Commercial entry then in some areas there are **area co-ordinators** who will include your entry into their itinerary for the area. If you are unsure as to whether there is a co-ordinator in your area, please contact the Regional Organiser.

How much time does it take?

The time allowance for each entry will vary with the category and the of the locations within the entry. Below are some guidance times but your will be able to advise you further.



spread
judge

Category	Guidance time	Category	Guidance time
Small Village	1 hr	Large Town	2.5 hrs
Village	1 hr	Small City	3 hrs
Large Village	1.5 hr	City	3.5 hrs
Small Town	2 hrs	Large City/Met Borough	4 hrs
Town	2 hrs	Urban Community	2 hrs
Coastal Resort	2.5 hrs	Coastal Resort	3 hrs
BID / Town Centre	1.5– 2.5 hr	Parks	1 hr
Neighbourhood	30 mins		
Hospice	30 mins		
Railway Station	30 mins		

Note

Extra time can be allowed for any unforeseen circumstances or press activity but this will be at the judges' discretion.



TIPS

Make sure the judges know where to meet and provide a contact number.

Provide car parking for your judges and make transport arrangements well in advance.

Judges are humans not robots and may have driven a long way to you. Offer comfort facilities on their arrival - tea or coffee would be most welcome.



Go through the BIB marking sheet to ensure the judges see everything you want them to see and you cover every section. Concentration on any one section will not gain extra marks no matter how good it is.

Look back at your previous judging sheets and use these for guidance. The judges will receive previous copies of these before judging day.

Rehearse the presentation and what to say to the judges on the tour.

Plan for all weather conditions – judges appreciate umbrellas / bottles of water in rain / hot weather.

Include time for the judges to meet the people in your entry; they will bring each project to life. Ensure they know when you are arriving and for how long.

Show involvement from different age ranges (children through to elderly).

Be innovative and provide the judges with strong memories of the day **e.g.** quirky things that stand out

Every community is different. Show off and celebrate your local features.





Judges look for quality not quantity, don't rush the judges around. Be prepared to give the judges time to take notes and photographs.

Have a time keeper.

Use others within the group to help organise the tour.

Ensure that there are photo-opportunities for the press or other photographers. The judges will be happy to answer questions and be photographed but try to keep this to one location if you can.



If there is a reception for the judges after the visit to meet others involved, then please advise the judges beforehand. Their schedule is very tight but if they know beforehand then they will be very pleased to spend some time with you.

Allow time at the end of the tour for the judges to say goodbye and thank you to everyone involved

If some aspects of your entry can't be seen provide photographs or descriptions in your Portfolio **e.g.** bulb planting or spring bulbs in flower. Have a record with before and after photographs of areas that have been transformed.

Display boards with photos/ press clippings at the starting/finishing points are a good opportunity to show off your work.

Listen to the judges, ask for advice and take notes as all the advice they give may not be in their report.



Enjoy your day, relax and don't be nervous regardless of the weather or how you feel the visit is going, have **FUN** and **SMILE!**



Example Itinerary

This should be sent to the Judges and Regional Organiser before the day.

Monday 16th July Judges: BAB and ANO			
Time	Location	Duration	Description / People
8.30am	Meet at Town Hall, (Welcome / presentation)	15 mins	Meet NV 15mins presentation
9.15am	Tour of Small Town including	3 hours	
	Village Allotments - IYN		2 allotment owners
	Sycamore Grove - IYN		Meet 2 residents
	Primary School Community Garden		Group of school children
	Community centre - IYN		Display of produce
12.30pm	Lunch	30 mins	
1.15pm	Tour of Large Village including	2 hrs	
	Cross Lanes – Caravan Park - Commercial		Short tour of park
	The Golden Hind - Public House - Commercial		Meet landlord
3.15pm	Tour of Village, including:	2hrs 15mins	
	Sheltered Housing Community - IYN		Meet 2 residents
	Church Community - IYN		Group of volunteers
5.30pm	Return to Town Hall	End of Day	

The judges may need to be escorted between sites. When preparing your itinerary, bear in mind that if you can cover the route alone in an hour, on the day of judging it could take at least one and a half to two hours.

If you have Commercial Britain in Bloom entries or It's Your Neighbourhood (IYN) entries these can be included in the itinerary and the judges informed that they are also independent entries as well as part of your 'In Bloom' entry. Additional time may be needed to judge the IYN and Commercial entries.

School involvement is encouraged but there should only be one school included in the 'In Bloom' tour. An alternative competition for schools is the **RHS Campaign for School Gardening**, <https://schoolgardening.rhs.org.uk/home>





Presentation and Portfolio

Presentation

The time spent by the judges at each location means they only see a snapshot of what has been achieved over the past 12 months. Consider a **short presentation or video (5 – 15mins)** at the start of the visit. This should not replicate the portfolio but should set out your aims and objectives and introduce the key elements of your entry.

The Portfolio

A **portfolio** is a record that shows your year-round commitment to your campaign over the last 12 months and throughout the other seasons and in particular areas or events that the judge may not be able to see on the day **e.g.** a winter display or an allotment open day. This is a great opportunity to highlight what you have done since last year and will be a useful resource for future years.

Many groups are emailing their portfolio to our North West in Bloom email address info@northwestinbloom.com. This saves on paper and our Regional Coordinators will forward the portfolio on to the judges who have been scheduled to visit.

Alternatively, please have **2 copies** available for the judges on the day. These portfolios act as an aide memoir by the judges and helps to jog the judges' memory of what they have been told and seen earlier.

Do not give the judges your only precious copy of your portfolio.

Portfolio Structure

TIP Keep it simple and easy to read.

Introduction

Set the scene, outline the entry and how it is organised,
 Who is on the group
 How long the group has been going, how often they meet
 A list of notable events/achievements
 What are your aims and objectives

This should be on one side of A4 paper with perhaps a key photograph.

Content could include:

- Your achievements to date, improvements made over the past year and an outline of your goals for the future.
- Anything not covered during your judging route. Concentrate on at least one item from each section, **i.e.** Horticultural Achievement, Environmental Responsibility, and Community Participation. Sometimes marks can be picked up here if things have been omitted during the judging route.
- Environmental work carried out, **e.g.** litter picks and clean ups especially those showing the community involvement.
- Year-round effort and work undertaken in areas not included in the judging tour **e.g.** photographs of people involved in the planting of winter/spring displays.



Note: Please note that all photographs should be dated and relatively recent.

- How your 'In Bloom' entry is funded e.g. grants, sponsors, fundraising event such as a coffee morning, plant sales, raffle - include some photos.
- Promotion of your 'In Bloom' campaign **e.g.** display in a shop window, posters about the campaign, website of IYN's involved.
- Press coverage but don't fill the portfolio with press cuttings; maybe use display boards to showcase your 'In Bloom' activity to the judges on the route.



Remember:

The portfolio should be no more than 16 sides of A4, including a front and back cover, using an easily read font. Remember points are not awarded for the quality or style of the portfolio.

Colourful photographs are great but please limit their inclusion to no more than 50% of the overall content.

The judges may want to discuss the portfolio so allow 10 minutes in your programme.





What the Judges want to see (Core Categories and Urban)?

The entries are judged using the standard criteria on the RHS Marking sheet which can be found on our website at www.northwestinbloom.com

There are 3 areas that are judged:

- A Horticulture (40% of Mark)
- B Environment (30% of Mark)
- C Community (30% of Mark)

These are broken down into sections and the marking criteria appear in *italics* under each heading.

A Horticulture

A1 Overall Impression (Core and Urban)

Taking account of all relevant factors, how strong is the impact of the entry in creating a memorable impression? Are designs and materials used appropriate to their locations? Emphasis here is on co-ordination and overall quality.

Within your entry the types of areas may include:

Residential and community gardening

This could include **e.g.** Primarily front gardens/gardens in public view, residential homes, communal areas, allotments, public buildings, church grounds, schools, libraries, town halls, car parks, amenity planting areas, residential areas, publicly owned areas.

Are these in keeping with the overall efforts of the campaign?

Is there engagement with the residents in improving their own area?



Business areas and premises

These could include **e.g.** retail and shopping areas, leisure sites, transport terminals, car parks, farms, rural businesses, pubs, hotels, garages, post offices, tourist areas/attractions, offices, estate agents, screen planting near industrial areas, eyesores or vacant plots.

Are these in keeping with the overall efforts of the campaign?

Is there engagement with the businesses in improving their own area e.g. sponsoring displays, volunteering, funding initiatives.

Green spaces

These could include **e.g.** verges, pocket parks and open public spaces, roadside and roundabouts, woodlands, copses and shelterbelts.



A2 Maintenance of Planted Areas (Core and Urban)

Are the areas within the entry maintained to an appropriate standard, including cultivation, weeding, feeding, pruning, grass maintenance, tree management and maintenance?

You will need to demonstrate best horticultural practice **e.g.** cultivation, plant maintenance, sustainability, renewal / replacement and new planting, watering, dead heading and weeding, feeding where appropriate, irrigation, thinning, trimming or pruning, grass maintenance, tree management and maintenance.

A3 Plant Selection (Core)

Are the plants or trees, used in the planting schemes, suited to their growing conditions, locations and purposes? Is there a diverse range of plant-species to attract a variety of insects and wildlife? Is there year-round interest, where appropriate?

A3 Seasonal Displays (Urban)

Are the plants used to enhance the visitor experience and celebrate seasonal or local annual events.

Design and Colour

- Is there a theme overall, are the colours suitable for the location or theme?
- Are plants used to enhance the visitor experience and celebrate seasonal or local annual events?
- Are the plants appropriate for the location; are there too many or too few plants in terms of flowering period and habit; is there sufficient variation?

Choice of plants

Horticultural activities should be effective all year round. Seasonal floral displays are important but must be proportionate to the areas of sustainable planting and permanent landscaping.

Is there appropriate use of bedding, herbaceous planting, trees and shrubs especially in newly and recently (up to 5 years) planted areas.

Planting could be for foliage effect, bark effect etc., for a specific purpose (i.e. conservation) or to provide flowering or other effects for a defined period.



or

Special features – These should act as a focal point **e.g.** structures or intensive area of bedding

Presentation - Areas should be well presented and maintained

Innovation – Include new and creative ideas - colours, themes, plant selection

New Planting - How much new planting happens each year? Is there a long term plan?



A4 Plant Quality (Core)

Are the plants or trees vibrant and grown to their full potential? Are they generally free of pests and diseases?

A4 Plant Selection and Quality (Urban)

Are the plants used in the planting schemes suited to their growing conditions and locations and is there year-round interest, including, where appropriate, the use of vertical walls or roof gardens?

Plants should be of good quality and obviously flourishing, free from pests, diseases or deficiencies, appropriate size for the location and soil type

B Environment

Environmental responsibility should underpin everything you do but the judges will concentrate on the following:

B1 Local Identity and Pride of Place (Core and Urban)

Is there a sense of place, with appropriate acknowledgement of local heritage (including biodiversity) and its relevance for the community e.g. art in the landscape, signage, interpretation etc.?

Consider the pride taken in hard landscape (including streets), open spaces (including grass areas, wild areas and beaches if appropriate), street furniture maintenance, etc.

This covers the management and development of local heritage, community landmarks or identity – including the natural heritage.



What activities has the local bloom campaign been involved with or initiated to ensure these areas are appropriately managed and developed? Has the campaign taken these areas into account in their own activities / initiatives?

B2 Natural Environment (Core)

Is there an understanding of what biodiversity means locally? Have efforts been made to create, restore or maintain appropriate habitats to support wildlife? What has been done to assess the effectiveness of any interventions? E.g. through surveys. Is nature being considered in all activities, rather than just restricting wildlife-friendly practices to a specific project or area?

B2 Built Environment (Urban)

Consider management and maintenance of commercial and residential stock, vacant properties and plots, building and development controls including the appropriate screening and associated interim enhancements of development sites.



Conservation and biodiversity

Evidence of establishing, maintaining and conserving the natural habitat and wildlife areas **e.g.** wildflower pockets, bird / bat boxes, choice of plants. Activities to educate the community and encourage them to visit these areas. Activities or plans to re-introduce or restore these areas where they have disappeared or been damaged?

Resource management

Active policies should be in place to

- Recycle
- Reduce the demand on natural resources, **e.g.** water, peat, timber
- Minimise any harmful impact on the environment **e.g.** Minimal use of pesticides and nitrate fertilisers



Sustainability – ensure ecological functions, processes, biodiversity and productivity can be maintained and only use resources at a rate that can be replenished naturally. Take into consideration the balance of permanent / sustainable planting vs. seasonal/bedding plants and the timing of displays.

B3 Environmental Management (Core)

Have steps been taken to employ sustainable or ecological gardening practices? E.g. avoiding chemicals like pesticides and using other biological and physical controls like hand weeding or companion planting. Eliminating the use of peat, implementing solutions like composting, reducing the use of plastics and recycling those used. Taking measures to minimise the use of water.

Where local environmental issues have been identified, have plants or greening solutions been considered, e.g. as rain gardens, green roofs/walls, or as barriers for pollution?

Local environmental quality

This could include **e.g.** the management of any vacant premises and plots, water features, cleaning up polluted sites and screening derelict areas reducing litter, graffiti, fly-posting, fly tipping, dog fouling, vandalism etc.

TIP Raising public awareness of these issues is also important.



C Community

'In Bloom' is a community driven campaign so this area is critical to the success of your entry. A diverse range of people should be involved, and there should be a broad public awareness and support.

C1 Year-Round Activity and Future Commitment (Core and Urban)

Evidence of forward planning and year-round activities, initiatives or events, highlighting where they are adding value and demonstrating the strengths or uniqueness of the entry.

There should be a schedule of events with supporting evidence of year-round activity to keep people involved **e.g.** Out of season activities, litter picks, leaf clearing, fundraising events, repairing / preparing of landscape areas and street furniture, educational activities. This should be shown in the presentation and portfolio with supporting evidence **e.g.** photographs, promotional materials, press clippings, calendar of events.

TIP See Presentation and portfolio guidelines

Development and continuity

The 'In Bloom' campaign should have plans to maintain and develop the improvements they have made and to demonstrate the sustainability and benefits of the bloom initiative through on-going projects.

- Have plans been developed to ensure on-going benefits of the bloom campaign?
- Are there plans in place for on-going projects?
- Has the bloom campaign got a structure and support network to ensure its own development in the future?

C2 Communication, Education and awareness (Core and Urban)

Use of suitable interpretation, enabling learning and a greater understanding of purpose, and environmental importance. Engagement with schools, young people or other groups. Promotion within the immediate area through local and regional communications. Appropriate communications and media involvement evidenced.

The group needs to have an effective communication and education programme to raise community awareness and understanding.

Judges will expect to see

Publicity materials, press coverage, signage, displays, local media (newspapers, magazines, radio, TV as applicable).

Example

Organise a gardening poster competition to encourage gardeners to show off their gardens and for children to show off their art skills! The posters could be displayed in local shops and sponsored by local businesses.

Example

Run a sponsored sign scheme to bring in reliable funds for the programme and re-invest the money in the area where the sign has been adopted



Evidence of the Bloom group supporting public awareness and educational campaigns to create community awareness and understanding on key issues.

In particular activities and initiatives engage with children and young people, **e.g.** schools, young people, community groups

Community involvement

This should be representative of the community's size and diversity and show involvement of all ages, ethnicities, cultures, religions, abilities (special needs and the disabled) and incorporate community reparation volunteers, **e.g.** For a young and ethnically diverse community the judges will expect to see them engaged with your Bloom initiatives. There should be an emphasis on young people through schools' engagement.



- Has the bloom campaign supported and encouraged any Neighbourhood Awards groups in their area?

C3 Support and Funding (Core and Urban)

Has the entry made every effort to be inclusive, and engage the support of a wide variety of local groups and organisations? Participation should be representative of the local community. Evidence of fundraising and on-going support from a range of businesses and organisations appropriate to the size of the entry, making it viable and able to continue moving forward

Is there sufficient evaluation and evidence of the economic impact of various initiatives? (Urban only).

'In Bloom' groups should develop initiatives to secure on-going support for the local bloom campaign including local business support. Show evidence of:

- Efforts made to secure support and future plan of action
- Amount of support secured
- Has sufficient support been secured to ensure the campaign is able to deliver its objectives?

Support can mean not just funds but also the active engagement of local government, commercial sectors, local businesses and the general public in the campaign **e.g.** maintenance support from council services, shopkeepers cleaning up and greening up their storefronts, local businesses sending staff to volunteer on a Bloom project



What the Judges want to see (Commercial Categories)?

Commercial In Bloom entries are assessed as shown on the Marking sheet on our website <https://www.northwestinbloom.com/rhs-bib>

This is a shorter assessment (approximately). These are the areas the judges will be assessing:

Floral displays (Design & Quality) 60 marks

Are the floral displays appropriate for the entry and the theme of the display? What is the impact and overall impression? Are there any special floral features?

Is there evidence of a good standard of display maintenance?

Hard and soft landscaping projects 60 marks

What is the impact and overall impression of the hard and soft landscaping? Are there special permanent features and if so what is the condition and standard of maintenance of the hard landscape areas?

Environmental Quality 40 marks

Has the quality of the environment been considered? Was the area clean and tidy? Are there any recycling schemes?

Overall Impression 10 marks

Overall has the entry met the objectives of Britain in Bloom?



Time Allowance and Awards

The size of Commercial entries can vary considerably but as a guideline the maximum time allowance is 30 minutes. The entry is marked out of a total of 170 and then assigned and award as follows:

Commercial Award	Score
Gold	140 -170
Silver Gilt	128 - 139
Silver	104 - 127
Bronze	87 - 103



Business Improvement District (BID) / Town / City Centre

As this is a diverse category, allowances are made for the scale of the entry, **e.g.** A BID may be small compared to a large city centre.

The area of most BIDs can be quite easily defined, but Town and City centres are harder to define. The centre point of these entries should be 1km from a self-determined point giving a 2km diameter. The exact centre and radius should be submitted on a map by the entry.

The size of the entry will determine the assessment time, but will be no more than 2.5 hrs plus the standard 15 min presentation and press.

A larger Town or City centre entry can include a number of smaller BIDS or a larger BID entry can comprise of several smaller BIDS.

The entries are judged using the standard criteria on the RHS BID Marking sheet which can be found on our website <https://www.northwestinbloom.com/rhs-bib>

There are 3 areas that are judged as for other Britain in Bloom entries. The allocation of marks to the 3 areas, however, differs to reflect the greater importance of the environment and the business community.

A Horticulture (40% of Mark) - includes a new section on the use of plant material to celebrate seasonal or local annual events, **e.g.** seasonal planting, baskets, containers, Christmas/Easter or other events.

B Environment (30% of Mark)

C Community (30% of Mark)

Gold - Excellent 85-100 points	Silver Gilt - Very Good 75-84 Points	Silver - Good 60-74 Points	Bronze – Satisfactory 50-59 Points
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The Presentation and portfolio should include an annual development plan reporting against a baseline, where the entry has come from and how much has been achieved.

Parks

These entries are judged using the standard criteria on the RHS Parks Marking sheet which can be found on our website <https://www.northwestinbloom.com/rhs-bib>

This category includes public accessible spaces of various sizes e.g. Park, Large and Small Park, Country park, cemeteries

The following elements are judged: Community (10 Marks), Maintenance (10 Marks) and Environment (10 Marks) – a total of 30 marks.

Gold 27-30 Points	Silver Gilt 21-26 Points	Silver 15-20 Points	Bronze 10-15 Points	Cert of Achievement 3-9 Points
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In addition, parks are eligible to be assessed for the **RHS Certificate of Distinction**. This can be achieved when the Park is assessed at Silver Gilt or above for 2 consecutive years.



Awards

Every participant will receive an achievement award based on the judges' assessment against the RHS criteria.

Award	Description
GOLD Outstanding 85-100 points	An exceptionally high standard demonstrated throughout. A consistent approach that demonstrates best practice, continuing development and sustainable effort. Meets all of the judging criteria and scores very highly in every section of the marking sheet.
SILVER GILT Very Good 75-84 points	A high standard entry, which meets virtually all of the judging criteria and includes sections of exceptionally high standards. Exemplifies best practice in multiple areas and demonstrates very high potential for continuing development and sustainable effort.
SILVER Good 60-74 points	Considered to be an above-average entry that meets many of the judging criteria. The entry will include more than one sub-section that demonstrates exceptionally high standards. In particular, the entry will demonstrate a clear potential to improve in several areas and for sustainable effort.
BRONZE Satisfactory 50-59 points	An average entry that meets some but not necessarily all of the judging criteria. The entry will include at least one sub-section that demonstrates a very high standard but the standards will not be consistent throughout. There will be some evidence of the potential to improve and of the ability to sustain effort.
NO AWARD at this Stage 1-49 points	The entry may have a number of good merits and may have done well in its category in the region; however, the entry has not met the judging criteria to a national standard. The entry is not sufficiently developed to achieve any of the <i>RHS Britain in Bloom UK Finals medals</i> .

In addition, there are a number of special or discretionary awards presented for excellence in a particular area.

Representatives of the groups will be invited to attend an Awards Ceremony held in mid-October to receive their certificates at the Britain in Bloom North West Presentation ceremony (dependent on Covid restrictions). The Awards are also a chance to celebrate all the excellent work the groups have done in transforming the North West.

Note: Any portfolio that has been presented to the judges on their visit will be available for collection at the Presentation of Awards Ceremonies.



Support

Support for your group can mean a variety of things not least of which is the support of the community through volunteers, consultation, feedback, and endorsements. Other types of support include political support, support in kind and financial support.

Political Support

This could include endorsement or actual help from your Local Council, Councillor or MP. Invite local councillors and council staff to your events and remember councils have their own targets to meet so try to find out what these are before the meeting.

Support in Kind

This could include: **e.g.** donations of plants, products, tools and equipment, services to operate heavy equipment, donating a venue for a fundraising event or meeting, plants.

Think creatively how others can support you.

e.g. Local GP surgery may be able to recommend your project to improve health and well being

Weight loss groups may be looking for healthy activities to recommend to their customers.

How do I gain support?

If you are approaching anyone for support of any kind it is important to have the following in place:

- A clear action plan – what are you trying to achieve and how will this benefit the local community
- A shopping list – clearly identify what you need
- A budget - have some idea of what it costs to make your project a reality
- A 'Prospects' list – identify all the people you can contact for support and the key contact within that organisation. Prioritise the list with those most likely to support your group
- Have a specific plan for each individual or organisation you are to contact. Think about who they are, what they do, how they might help you and even how you may help them



Prepare your pitch for support

In the pitch make sure you provide the following information.

Name of the group, its status and the key contact

Your work with aims and objectives

Timetable of work and completion dates

Special events

What are you asking for?

Existing support

How will they benefit from supporting you?
e.g. a company that prides itself on being 'green'

How you will spend the money?

TIPS

Each pitch for support will be different so keep copies of what you send to the various sponsors and seek feedback on any failed applications to improve future pitches.

Publicise what you are doing as much as you can, you never know who may hear of the work you are doing.



Funding Resources

This involves fundraising, sponsors, grants or government funding. There are numerous sites which will help you with your funding.

Organisation	Website	Information
Directory of Social Change	https://www.dsc.org.uk	Useful publications such as <i>Complete Fundraising Handbook</i>
	https://www.dsc.org.uk/publication/the-complete-fundraising-handbook/	
UK Fundraising	https://fundraising.co.uk/	Information on grants
FCC Communities Foundation	http://www.fcccommunitiesfoundation.org.uk/	For public parks and amenities near a landfill site
Biffa Award	http://www.biffa-award.org/	
Co-operative community fund	https://causes.coop.co.uk/	Community projects
Heritage Lottery Fund	https://www.hlf.org.uk/funding/what-we-fund	Local, regional and national heritage
Lottery funding	https://www.tnlcommunityfund.org.uk/funding/thinking-of-applying-for-funding	



Where do I go for Support?

Regional organiser

Our regional organiser will be happy to answer any questions or put you in touch with other groups that are near you. The contact details are in the front of this book.

Judges

Many of our judges are happy to come and talk to your group and give you guidance. In addition, judges can mentor a new group in their first year. However, a judge would not be assigned to judge the entry they have been supporting.

Area Co-ordinators

These are people that are involved with a large number of entries and they will have a great deal of experience of the best way to organise your entry. They will also be able to put you in contact with other groups in your area. Many experienced groups may be happy to offer support to new entries especially in the same locality.

RHS

For More Information regarding insurance please contact the following:-

Royal Horticultural Society | Sports Insure | Aon

Direct Line : 0161 687 2440

rhsgroups@sports-insure.co.uk

<https://www.sports-insure.co.uk/client/rhs/home/>

<https://www.rhs.org.uk/get-involved/affiliated-societies>

RHS Online resources

A few of the RHS resources that are available to help you plan your campaign

RHS Plant Selector / Plant Finder

<https://www.rhs.org.uk/plants/search-Form>

RHS Perfect for Pollinators

<https://www.rhs.org.uk/science/conservation-biodiversity/wildlife/perfect-for-pollinators>



Working with Volunteers

Think about:

- What you want the volunteers to do?
- How many volunteers you need?
- The type of volunteering opportunities **e.g.** one off opportunities on a casual basis; longer term opportunities as part of the organising group?
- The training, support or supervision needed? Who will provide this?
- Who are the activities suitable for – are there small changes you could make to ensure all ages and abilities can take part?

Safeguarding Statement

RHS NWIB is fully committed to keeping everyone involved with their initiatives and activities safe particularly children and vulnerable adults. Please see attached safeguarding statement in Appendix 2.

Recruitment of Volunteers

Recruitment methods will vary depending on the types of volunteers needed. When advertising provide:

Date, time, location, skills/equipment/clothing needed, tasks involved.

If recruiting a volunteer for the organising group, a brief volunteer role description and an application form may be needed.

Methods: Social media, websites, local newsletter, leafleting, posters, local youth groups (Scouts and Guides), schools (**e.g.** Duke of Edinburgh), community groups (**e.g.** Rotary Club) and businesses, local volunteer services

TIPS

- Make the volunteering opportunities attractive, exciting, and inclusive
- Provide different flexible volunteering opportunities **e.g.** during the week, evenings or at weekends, and those which require differing commitments.
- Use easily accessible activities, **e.g.** bulb planting, to encourage people initially
- Involve local residents or community groups in initial Bloom planning or provide them with ownership of certain areas
- Keep volunteers informed of what you are doing e.g. tell them about the impact they have had and the benefits of being involved.
- Get feedback from the volunteers **e.g.** their motivations for getting involved, if they'd come back again, why others don't get involved, the ideas and skills they have.
- Use case studies about volunteer experiences to encourage others
- Always find a way to say **thank you e.g.** provide drinks and biscuits, community celebration once the work has been done, a thank you note in a local community newspaper.



Management of Volunteers

TIPS

- Identify someone as the key contact on the day and be clear about everyone's responsibilities.
- Use a generic email address on adverts rather than a personal email account.
- If collecting personal data think about how you manage and store the volunteer data to meet data protection legislation.
- If anything, inappropriate or unsafe is seen or reported to you then handle it as soon as possible.
- Ensure you have the correct insurance that covers volunteers. This is available from :-
- **Royal Horticultural Society | Sports Insure | Aon**
Direct Line : 0161 687 2440
rhsgroups@sports-insure.co.uk
<https://www.sports-insure.co.uk/client/rhs/home/>
<https://www.rhs.org.uk/get-involved/affiliated-societies>
- Always act within the law when working with children, young people and vulnerable adults.
- If a volunteer manages finances, be aware of the legal implications **e.g.** keep accurate records and budgets, ensure monies are spent for the correct purpose, clarify the responsibility for approving spending or signing cheques.
- Have a brief policy that covers volunteer's expenses or reimbursement to volunteers who buy equipment or resources with their own money.

Useful Resources

Organisation	Website	Information
Local Volunteer Centres	www.ncvo.org.uk/ncvo-volunteering/find-a-volunteer-centre	Helps organisations that work with volunteers
National Council for Voluntary Organisations	www.ncvo.org.uk/	How to get started in the voluntary sector.



The National Competition

If a group does well in their regional competition (e.g. North West) they can be nominated by the regional judges for the National Britain in Bloom competition the following year. The group will then be judged by national judges and will be competing against other groups in their category across the UK.

Example

Elswick in Bloom was awarded the '**Champion of Champions**' in 2017 RHS Britain in Bloom ceremony for the way their many volunteers turned the village into somewhere clean, green, beautiful and a source of pride for the whole community.



Appendices

The following pages contain sample constitution and safeguarding statement



SAMPLE CONSTITUTION – APPENDIX 1

1 Name of the Organisation

2 Area

3 Purpose and Vision

- 3.1 To make NAME a more attractive place for residents and visitors.
- 3.2 To encourage residents and traders to take a pride in their environment.
- 3.3 To create and develop newly planted areas and enhance existing natural and planted areas in and around NAME.
- 3.4 To work with local schools to encourage young people to take an active role in caring for their surroundings.
- 3.5 To raise funds via sponsorship, grant applications and donations etc.
- 3.6 To liaise closely with the parish and local councils, and other authorities.

4 Equal Opportunities

- 4.1 NAME will ensure that everyone is given the opportunity to participate fully and equally, regardless of race, gender, age, sexuality, disability and religion, working towards the elimination of all forms of discrimination.

5 Safeguarding

- 5.1 Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. Every child, young person and vulnerable adult that participates in any activity organised by NAME should be able to participate in an enjoyable and safe environment and be protected from any type of abuse. Any inappropriate behaviour should be reported to the appropriate safeguarding contact. Please see Appendix 2 Safeguarding Statement.

6 Membership

- 6.1 Membership of NAME is open to anyone interested in supporting and furthering the aims of the organisation.
- 6.2 Members shall at all times conduct themselves in a reasonable manner when attending meetings or any other function in connection with the group.

7 The Committee

- 7.1 A committee to carry out the business of the group shall be elected at the AGM.
- 7.2 The committee shall be made up of a secretary, chair, treasurer and at least 3 general members.
- 7.3 The Secretary and Treasurer shall be elected annually and the Chairperson shall be elected on a two-year basis.
- 7.4 Vacancies arising during the year can be filled by an election at a general meeting.
- 7.5 If a committee member should wish to resign, he/she should give the committee no less than 21 days' notice in writing.
- 7.6 A committee member may be suspended/dismissed from the committee if they fail to attend 3 meetings without sending apologies.



- 7.7 If it is alleged that a committee member has committed gross misconduct, the committee will call an extra-ordinary meeting. The committee member will be entitled to speak or be represented by another member at the meeting. The committee's decision will be conveyed to the committee member in writing within three days of the extra-ordinary meeting.

8 Finance

- 8.1 NAME is a voluntary, non-profit making organisation and no member of the group shall stand to gain from any money raised.
- 8.2 The funds of NAME shall be paid into a bank account set up specifically for the organisation. All cheques drawn on the account must be signed by any 2 of the 3 elected officers.
- 8.3 The treasurer shall have the accounts checked by an independent person at the end of each financial year.
- 8.4 The accounts shall be made available to all at the AGM.
- 8.5 NAME can reimburse trustees for expenditure incurred on behalf of the organisation, but, except for exceptional circumstances, receipts must be provided. Payments to a trustee must be authorised in writing by at least one unconflicted trustee. If no receipt is provided a record must be kept as to why the payment was agreed.

9 Meeting and Annual General Meeting (AGM)

- 9.1 Meetings shall be held on a regular basis as required and in addition an Annual General Meeting held.
- 9.2 The business of the AGM shall be to:-
- Receive the annual report of NAME in Bloom
 - Distribute a statement of accounts
 - Elect officers for the coming year to hold office from the end of the meeting
 - Discuss any other appropriate business
- 9.3 Minutes of public meetings shall be available to all.
- 9.4 The AGM shall vote on recommendations and any amendments to the constitution.
- 9.5 An Extra-ordinary General Meeting can be called at any time by an elected officer.
- 9.6 No meeting (committee, extra-ordinary, annual general or public) shall take place if less than two thirds of the committee are present.

10 Voting

- 10.1 Any member may make a proposal but this must be seconded or supported by someone else before a vote can take place.
- 10.2 Any member may propose an amendment which must also be seconded.
- 10.3 Only members present at the meeting may vote.
- 10.4 No member shall exercise more than one vote.
- 10.5 In the event of an equal vote, the Chair shall have the casting vote.

11 Dissolution

- 11.1 If at an Extra-ordinary General Meeting it is decided to wind up the organisation's activities, any remaining assets, after payments of any outstanding accounts, shall be given or transferred to such other local charitable institutions having objectives similar to those of NAME.



This constitution was adopted as the constitution of the group, at a Public meeting held on

Signed(Chairperson) **Date**.....

Signed.....(Secretary) **Date**.....



SAFEGUARDING STATEMENT – Appendix 2

A Safeguarding / Child Protection Statement for North West in Bloom Judges, Assessors, Coordinators, In Bloom and Community Gardening Groups, Volunteers and anyone involved in Royal Horticultural Societies (RHS) North West in Bloom (NWIB) activities.

Introduction –

RHS NWIB is fully committed to keeping everyone involved with their initiatives and activities safe, particularly Children and Vulnerable Adults. The aim of this statement is to remind everyone of their responsibilities, and how we work in partnership to keep everyone safe and free from any aspect of harm or abuse.

It confirms what to do if anyone suspects an individual has been subjected to or discloses that they or someone else has been subjected to any form of abuse or harm.

Aim –

- The aim of this statement is to promote safe environments for everyone involved in NWIB activities and ensure that they are protected from harm.
- Many of the organisations and partners involved in NWIB activities, will have related policy and procedures in place and these need to be followed.
- To remind everyone that this is a legal responsibility and there is further information and guidance available from the following:

[Keeping Children Safe in Education 2020 KCSIE](#)

Counter Terrorism and Security Act (Prevent legislation) 2015

Education Act 1986, 2002

Individual Local Safeguarding Arrangements Guidance from each Local Authority, etc

Scope –

North West in Bloom is NOT registered or responsible for the care of “Children or Vulnerable Adults,” but is aware their judges, assessors may visit groups in the region where they maybe directly or indirectly involved in Bloom community initiatives. This may involve visits to pre-schools, schools, colleges’, or community projects. We therefore insist that our judges / assessors have NO unsupervised access to any children or vulnerable adults during their NWIB visits. Also, that they follow individual organisations Safeguarding Policy and Procedures, e.g. signing in procedures.

Where Bloom and associated Community Volunteer groups are working with Children (under the age of 18) and Vulnerable Adults, we would strongly recommend that the Children and or Vulnerable Adults are always accompanied by a responsible adult, carer who is suitably trained and qualified, and if this is not their parent or guardian,



they have written permission (reviewed and updated at least annually) from the parent / guardian confirming they grant said permission. School children who are involved directly in Bloom initiatives at school for example, should always be accompanied by the appropriate number of competent staff. And also, they will follow approved Health and Safety policy and procedures with appropriate risk assessments in place.

Photographs

All Bloom Judges and Assessors are encouraged to take photographs whilst they are on organised Bloom visits, particularly of any outstanding projects or features seen on the visit. However, they have been informed NOT to take pictures of any Children, Vulnerable Adults or Young people whilst on their Bloom visits. We would advise Bloom Groups to have written parental / guardian permissions (reviewed annually) that they give permission for their children to be included in appropriate Bloom related photographs and where they can be used eg, Bloom portfolios, celebrations and or related Social Media.

Reporting Concerns

If NWIB Judges / Assessors / Coordinators have a responsibility to know how to report any concern or suspected case of abuse. Similarly, we recommend Bloom / Community Gardening group coordinators, leaders and volunteers are also aware of how to recognise and report any such concern.

If a child, young person or vulnerable adult is in immediate danger of being harmed, call the police urgently on 999, giving as much information as possible.

If a child, young person or vulnerable adult confirms they have been or think they may be subject to any form of abuse, it is not the judges / assessors or Bloom representative's role to investigate or promise confidentiality or to offer their opinion.

It is everyone's responsibility to take appropriate action, which may include asking for the name and contact details of an organisations Designated Senior Lead for Safeguarding, all schools and educational establishments will have a named responsible adult in this role.

Alternatively, contact the North West in Bloom Office by email – info@northwestinbloom.com

Telephone 01995 – 642101 or Mobile 07714228079

We advise Bloom and Community coordinators, leads and volunteers to follow the same , and also suggest the RHS Community team can be contacted by email – communities@rhs.org.uk

Telephone 020 3176 5800

Conclusion –

North West in Bloom will ensure all assessors, judges, coordinators are reminded annually of their responsibilities in relation to Safeguarding and keeping Children,



Young People and Vulnerable Adults safe and free from harm. There will be a standard Safeguarding Agenda item at the NWIB Annual General Meeting. (AGM).

Additionally, this Safeguarding Statement will be included in all new Assessors / Judges training and listed in the Information Packs we share on our website and by email for both RHS Britain in Bloom and Its Your Neighbourhood Community Gardening groups