

SMALL TOWN

Welton

Silver Award, 134 points

Judged on 8th July

Judges: Simon Lucas & Liz Alun-Jones

Judges Award: For Linda Blankley's leadership into entering and leading Welton's excellent 1st entry into East Midlands in Bloom

Introduction.

This was Welton's first entry to East Midlands in Bloom. Our visit started at the community library with a presentation from Linda detailing the recent development of Welton, the Neighbourhood plan, local transport provision and proposals for future development of the 22-acre site all of which will have a significant effect on the character of 'the village'. The current Bloom group is made up of councilors, the village tree warden and staff. Notices and information about Welton in Bloom has been distributed via the Welton News, which is widely read, and at introduced at community hub events held in the library. Letters inviting local businesses to be involved with planting and maintaining hanging baskets were delivered. A comprehensive portfolio, tour map and itinerary had been prepared for the judges.

Areas of Achievement

Section A :

Pink, red and white were chosen for the planters which were bright and cheerful, and the standard of planting was good and well maintained by the council.

New planters and hanging baskets have been purchased made from recycled materials and all have reservoirs included to reduce water demand. Plants for displays were sourced from a local nursery with a strong environmentally friendly ethos, slow release fertiliser and water retaining gel has been used.

The village pump has a particular eye-catching display and the historic significance of this and other areas such as the pinfold was explained by Avril.

Many of the shopkeepers and businesses have planted hanging baskets with advice on care etc. and these were attractive and well maintained by themselves.

Peter showed us the delightful church yard at St Mary's which has bat, owl and bird boxes and saw the distant wildflower area. The flowers on the war memorial are maintained by volunteers and the lychgate entrance had an attractive floral display.

Ryland Road playing fields has a play park, grassy area and volunteer run social club.

Stonecliff Park residential area had very attractive and colourful display of planting in pots on the main avenue.

Section B:

As previously mentioned, the village pump has a particular eye catching display and the historic significance of this and other areas such as the pinfold was explained by Avril. Welton has many reminders of its history including a preserved area of ridge and furrow farming in a housing estate!

Local businesses had been approached earlier in the year inviting them to be involved and support In Bloom, many expressed concerns over recycling which is now being addressed. The absence of litter and weeds was commendable. We met an enthusiastic volunteer litter picker who was part of a group that has collected 300 bags of litter last year.

Street furniture was well maintained, new litter bins have been purchased and two Victorian-style lamp posts on the village green had attractive hanging baskets.

The council has installed dog waste bins and we saw evidence of the free 'poo bags' available to encourage their use and solar lighting which has been installed on public footpaths .

We were shown a flood abatement area known as the lagoon and heard about the proposal to remove trees and vegetation to provide a wildlife area whilst maintaining the ability to reduce flooding .

The Parish Council has recently purchased a weed ripper, the aim being both to remove weeds and keep kerb sides clean but also to reduce pesticide use. It will be interesting to see how effective this is. Tim from the Wild Trout Trust and Nicola from Lincolnshire River Trust outlined the work that had been carried out to clear the beck which runs through Ryland Park. Native planting has been introduced and work carried out to improve the river bed to encourage trout to move further upstream and into this area has been on going. Last year there was an infestation of chafer. Lawns were destroyed by rooks and crows eating the grubs. Residents have planted new lawns but many have chosen gravel instead. The judges were impressed with the development plans for Welton in Bloom and look forward to seeing the village progress in future.

Section C:

The Methodist Church had initiated a display of crochet poppies in 2018 to mark the end of WW1 and received nearly 3000 examples. These were displayed on the church railings.

We were met by Mrs. Gough and children from St Mary's Primary School who enthusiastically demonstrated the planting in pots, memorial area and outdoor classroom with tyre sculptures and impressive collages made from plastic bottle tops. The village has events on the Green such as Christmas Carol singing. Spring bulbs have been planted at the entrances to the village. They should be encouraged to enter into the regional schools competition.

Areas for Development

Section A:

There is plenty of scope for more display planters and hanging baskets. More involvement of local businesses and engagement of other groups such as Scouts and Guides, WI etc. to take responsibility for their own displays would be desirable.

The co-op for example will often have staff days when they help in the community, perhaps planting tubs and baskets or clearing an area? Are there opportunities for more (sponsored?) floral displays in the co-op post office, health centre precinct or at Welton Village Hall?

It would be good to see the allotments or community gardening projects included in the tour.

Consider a front garden competition as a way to encourage not only colourful front gardens but also a community spirit.

Section B:

Welton has a long and interesting history and whilst it is good for judges to learn of this, what opportunities are there for residents and visitors to learn more? Display boards at strategic sites or a heritage trail might be considered to celebrate this.

Should the chafer reappear this year continue to encourage appropriate control and for any replacement lawns to be planting or a non-hard surface finish.

Section C:

Currently the work for Welton in Bloom is carried out by the Parish Council. We would encourage the formation of an independent, constituted, groups with greater links with volunteer groups to encourage ownership and increase scope for more projects. Such a group may be able to apply for grants not available to the council! It is however essential to maintain a strong partnership with the council.

The council has commendably provided the litter pickers with hi-vis vests, are these printed with 'Welton in Bloom'? This can be a great opportunity of both keeping volunteers safe and creating opportunities to talk to residents about the initiative

Consider using social media such as a Facebook group to include and inform the public.

Stonecliff Park residential area would indeed make a good IYN entry and we support this initiative, are there any other neighbours that could likewise benefit and of course in the process Welton?

A: 70 B: 38 C: 26 Total: 134