

# Judges Notes for Summer 2024



YORKSHIRE

## Category B1 – Small Businesses

### Abbeydale Residential Home

**Gold**

#### *Overall Impression*

As a Residential Home, Abbeydale has its residents firmly in mind in the layout and planting of the garden which surrounds the building. Surrounded by mature trees, it is divided into a number of areas, including lawns, flower beds, a small putting green, vegetable/fruit and herb raised beds, and other containers as well as a greenhouse (full of tomatoes at the time of the visit). Perennial beds are supplemented with the bright colours of bedding plants both in the ground and in hanging baskets, tubs and pots throughout the site. The colourful displays are not only visible from the building but from outside seating areas to the front and rear of the building where additionally residents can enjoy the scent of plants such as roses, jasmine and sweet peas. Earlier in the year colour is provided by the use of bulbs such as snowdrops, crocuses, daffodils and tulips.

Some residents with an interest in gardening help with the vegetable garden or have been able to plant up pots with plants of their choice. Visiting families are catered for with the putting green and garden games adjacent to a large wooden gazebo with undercover seating.

The well established trees provide a home for birds and other wildlife, with these being supplemented by a feeding station and bird and insect boxes. Garden waste is composted and water used efficiently with the use of irrigation systems.

In summary, this beautiful and well maintained garden successfully meets the need of those who live in the home and the owners and staff are to be congratulated for their vision in providing such a lovely environment which cannot fail to be of benefit to residents, their families and the staff who work there.

#### *Judges feedback on areas for consideration*

- It was good to hear about the gradual introduction of more perennials. With the judicious choice of plants this should reduce watering and help with year-round interest.
- The introduction of fruit bushes is to be commended, though it is unlikely that raspberries will do particularly well in a smallish pot. Strawberries would be ideal in

this context and can also be grown in hanging baskets. The raspberry cane(s) could perhaps be moved adjacent to the gazebo alongside the redcurrant bush?

## **Huddersfield Irish Centre**

**Gold and Joint  
Category Winner**

### ***Overall Impression***

What a joy to find this tiny oasis of a garden in the centre of Huddersfield.

The footprint of the garden at Huddersfield Irish Centre is no larger than a domestic garage and yet it is packed with a plethora of annual flowers and foliage plants. Full use is made of the warm microclimate created by the surrounding buildings and even within the small space the plants have been selected to suit the orientation.

I was even more impressed to learn that most of these beautiful plants had been grown by one of the club members, Peter. There was a wide range of different plants notably some pale green Nicotiana, planted to reflect the Irish theme, Pelargoniums grown from cuttings and some lovely Dahlias.

### ***Judges feedback on areas for consideration***

It is hard to see what more you could achieve in this small space. Keep up the good work

## **James White Family Butcher**

**Silver Gilt**

### ***Overall Impression***

A good clean shop front was made more striking by the pots of dark red cosmos which matched the window frames, awning and fly screen. The potted plants on the inside windowsill were simple but eye catching. This tiny space on the main street has planting maximised to its full potential. Continue with your floral endeavours which give a warm floral welcome to residents and visitors.

### ***Judges feedback on areas for consideration***

- This shop is an aesthetically pleasing part of the main street
- Signage and flyscreen
- The trailing ivy in the pots remains when the spring planting including cyclamen is undertaken
- Maintain your good standards
- Perhaps include Yorkshire in Bloom branding

## **Spar store**

## **Silver Gilt**

### ***Overall Impression***

A pleasant entrance area has been created by the store with its matched painted troughs and floral displays maintained by staff. The matching troughs were well planted with colourful annuals which caught the eye of both customers and passers by,

Some debris on judging day detracted from the otherwise clean paving, although you were short staffed on our visit

### ***Judges feedback on areas for consideration***

Perhaps you could publicise your involvement and any former successes in Yorkshire in Bloom.

## **The Bay Horse Inn - Goldsborough**

**Gold and Joint  
Category Winner**

### ***Overall Impression***

Good colourful kerbside display of window boxes with Thunbergia towers flanking the doorway.

The rear garden, accessible under an archway of greenery, was an eye opener. It should more accurately be described as a garden with a pub at the end, having trees, shrubs, climbers, perennials and annuals in abundance.

Covered seating areas were festooned with wisteria or clematis and had a mown grass and free play area beyond.  
Definitely a "WOW" moment.

### ***Judges feedback on areas for consideration***

A herb/edible flower garden could be provided for the kitchen which would enhance the visual, sensory and dining experience.

## **The Dusty Miller**

**Gold**

### ***Overall Impression***

Situated on a busy main road the first floor window boxes act as an impressive advert for the establishment, this supported by the extensive number of containers at ground level planting is a mix of seasonal and some perennial planting. The plants are supplied by NEET a charity that uses horticulture for therapy amongst other activities. The students visit during the season to carry out some maintenance work although Rob the landlord has the task of daily watering.

Water is collected, composting takes place and recycling where possible is undertaken. Being adjacent to a main road and car park provides challenges, which have been overcome to provide the displays.

### ***Judges feedback on areas for consideration***

- The weather this year has increased the workload in removing silt that washes from the road and can mean dealing with weeds if the silt is not removed, unfortunately there is no practical solution to this problem other than to keep on top of the issue.
- Carry on with the sweet peas to see if they fully recover to ensure you can grow more in future.

Supporting NEET is an excellent way to help the charity and gain the displays so if possible continue with this support.

## **Wagon & Horses, Chapeltown**

**Silver Gilt**

### ***Overall Impression***

The Wagon and Horses pub sits at the heart of Chapeltown right on a busy roundabout. The seasonal hanging baskets and window boxes are a colourful and vibrant enhancement to the busy street scene, and give you a warm welcome to this family pub. Even after the busy evening before the judging visit, the immediate area both around the building and within the beer garden to the rear, were spotless.

Areas to note - the covered seating area in the rear garden, covered in wisteria for spring blossom, and on the day of judging the jasmine was in full flower and the scent was wonderful. Peter is to be commended on his efforts to create a welcoming space, and the removal of the old, overgrown shrubs to the side of the building and the idea to grow both flowering and edibles in this space is inspired. Tomatoes, pumpkins and strawberries among the seasonal and sustainable vertical planting, and even a small wildflower patch has been sown, and adds interest. A few bird and bug boxes are also placed in this area, and it's well mulched to help with weed control.

### ***Judges feedback on areas for consideration***

- Interesting to hear Peters 5yr plan for the business, and his looking to encourage primary school children to help plan and plant the outside areas next year are good hear.
- Further plans to replace old shrubs in the planters with more sustainable planting to encourage beneficial insects and provide more colour and scent. Maybe consider, lavenders and perennials geraniums, that don't mind full sun and the drier conditions of the raised containers, and take little maintenance.
- Potential to move the standard holly's into their own containers giving them the space to flourish and as statement plants, making more room for other beneficial plants in the seating area.

A lovely start to this new entry, looking forward to seeing the ideas take shape over the next few years.

## **Category B2 – Medium Businesses**

**Beverley Racecourse Ltd**

**Gold**

### ***Overall Impression***

A warm welcome was given on arrival by Fiona Witty and Tom Longman, with Tom giving a guided tour of the site. Our thanks to them both for taking time out of a very busy day to accommodate our visit.

Due to the nature of the business the site is mainly laid to turf, with some hard standing parking and perimeter pathways near the main course buildings. All areas were clean with an absence of litter or extraneous materials. Planting is present around the main public focussed areas at both ground level and elevated on the course facing sides of buildings. Clear evidence provided of the understanding of the impact of race-goers and concessionaires on the course environment and how that affects planting decisions.

Turf care and management appeared excellent with no visible weeds and all areas being well presented including the racecourse itself. Visually the racecourse blends well with the surrounding pasture with no interruption to the views obtained from the public areas to the actual course and onwards across to Beverley

### ***Judges feedback on areas for consideration***

In general it was felt that the Team demonstrated excellence in ground maintenance and turf cultivation/management as would be expected. The planting showed some very good examples of selective, sensitive planting, but also some areas of weakness due to the need to focus on robust, low maintenance planting and the ever present problems of accommodating thousands of visitors to the site each year.

Perhaps some consideration could be given to

- Planting of aromatic plants and small shrubs around the disabled access ramp to screen this area and make it more welcoming
- Replacement of artificial topiary with live specimens if and when feasible
- Working with their partner nursery and potentially the local land based college to look at enhancing options for lower level planters usage and drought tolerant alternatives where watering may be problematic
- Provision of information regarding the Sunflower benches and their use to both staff and racegoers
- When external planting is considered that this is done with appropriate thought for the integration with the wider pastures
- The development of a portfolio that is added to through the year to demonstrate the breadth of work undertaken, to provide a visual record of changes (before, during, after), involvement of other organisations, etc. that have contributed to the entry
- Planting in the beds and the higher level boxes was more successful with a wider range of colours and plants being used giving visual interest. Lower level planters around the owners/badge holders area and admin building were less successful, it being acknowledged that the plants had not reached their expected potential leaving them looking a less impactful and, with some planters, distinctly sparse.
- There was plentiful artwork throughout the grounds, relating to either the East Riding or to horses, the majority of these utilised salvaged or repurposed materials. Planting around the artwork was discrete to enable focus on the sculptures, with the use of a lavender bed around a horse sculpture being a highlight.

## ***Overall Impression***

On entering through the gates of Country Style foods you are met with a barrage of colour giving an immediate WOW factor. What a wonderful way to greet not only those who work there but any visitors to the business. The planted areas are to the front of the buildings and there is a clear demarcation between the entry and the business – food production areas. Along the front of the building recycled plastic buckets, once containing jam have been repurposed and planted with spring bulbs and annuals. These have been used for many years. There is consideration being given to involving the local school to create pictures on them.

There are hanging baskets and barrier baskets on the fencing and on the side of the buildings. On one wall there were bag planters containing begonias which were full and thriving – the rose garden, selected by Christine, the owner, was healthy, well maintained and waiting for a little more sun to bring it back into flower. There are two lovely olive trees just outside the old chapel that is used as offices. It was great to see the troughs that have been planted inside the old chapel entrance giving a lovely warm welcome, bringing a little of the outside in.

The company have a contract with a nursery who plant the hanging baskets and barrier baskets. It was good to see that the barrier baskets contain perennials. All the displays have spring bulbs in them. The summer bedding is placed in their composting area and reused. There is a good watering system in place. The grassed areas are well maintained. It was lovely to see the 'Country Style Foods support Yorkshire in Bloom' sign on the main building wall. The planters across the road by the Bakers Hall mirror the planters on the main site. The whole area is well maintained and a delight to walk around.

## ***Judges feedback on areas for consideration***

Thank you for your time and the advising on the history of the Old Chapel and the possibilities for the future museum – this will be a long term project but well worthwhile. It was fantastic to hear how this family business has developed and expanded.

- Consider working with the school – especially if you can get them involved with the painting of the recycled plastic jam containers.

Consider using perennials such as cranesbill into the wall areas of the visitor's car park where you currently have annual geraniums. There is also a low growing rosemary which may like this area.

## **Goldsborough Hall**

**Gold and Category  
Winner**

### ***Overall Impression***

There are several very distinct areas at the Hall. The floral beds at the entrance are exuberant, packed with an eclectic mix of species of which *Echium pininana* and *Brugmansea arborea aurea* are stand out plants. The kitchen garden and greenhouse are a delight. Salads, vegetables, fruit and flowers are provided for the Hall, with exotic plants, seedlings and cuttings grown in the greenhouse.

Increased planting of shade tolerant plants in the Woodland area was visible, which will complement the *Galanthus* collection.

There are also Champion trees, an orchard, several floral borders and a Union flag mown into the lawn all of which combine to deliver a memorable experience.

### ***Judges feedback on areas for consideration***

Further information of *Galanthus* cultivars in the collection, showing their exact position with full botanical name, could be delivered either by leaflet or QR code. This could help identification and enhance the visitors' experience.

## **Paul Harrison Cars**

**Silver**

### ***Overall Impression***

The forecourt of this business has a prominent display of a vintage motorbike and troughs of annuals in psychedelic colours for the 60s look, brightening up the frontage on the main road through the village!

The plants are generally well maintained but may have struggled a little due to the poor weather earlier this summer. Appropriate trees and shrubs are being used to screen the metal security fence behind which is situated a wildflower area. Water butts are being used to collect rainwater from the building. There was some evidence of litter collecting under the canopy of the bushes and perhaps this could be gathered up when time allows.

However, congratulations must go to Paul Harrison Cars for endeavouring to bloom up a difficult site on a busy main road whilst keeping access for cars and customers to move about freely.



Spring bulbs in the grass verge gives all year interest, as do some of the shrubs which are evergreen.

As well as covering the metal fencing, the shrubs and bushes attract wildlife, as does the wild area at the back

### ***Judges feedback on areas for consideration***

- Some of the containers were not looking their best. Perhaps they were not getting sufficient sunlight so consider changing to more shade loving plants

## **Stirling Park Industrial Estate**

## **Silver Gilt**

### ***Overall Impression***

40kph winds certainly added interest to visiting this site which is very much loved and cared for by a dedicated team. Because of their nature industrial sites are not easy to work with and clearly great efforts have been made to do the very best for this one. It is impressive to hear that all around the site efforts are being made to ensure that this site is wildlife friendly and encouraging biodiversity with wild flower beds bringing a wide range of birds, bees and insects on to the site.

Much of the other planting is chosen with pollinators in mind. The orchard was an interesting and unusual feature. It will attract wildlife and at the same time helps the softening of the industrial nature of the site. Allowing little wild flowers to remain in the mown grass areas will be very beneficial to wildlife. All grassed areas and hard standing were well maintained and appropriate shrub areas well clipped. The use of many allium bulbs must fill the site with colour and encourage insect life during their flowering season.

Good regular communication between the tenants and management team must really benefit the site in many ways. Regular litter picking is done on site. Chemicals are reduced as much as possible on site and there is little use of water. It was good to see bird boxes on-site and to learn that many more have been ordered from the Horticap organisation.

Much good work is being done by this site in helping and supporting people who have various needs and local organizations around the area it was especially Impressive to hear of work with the Horticap organization and the local food bank.

It was good to see an interesting mix of planting in various areas around the site.

### ***Judges feedback on areas for consideration***

- Letting snowdrops flourish in spring in one of the grass areas of the site was a lovely idea. Perhaps the same idea could be extended to various other areas and extended to include miniature daffodils and even species tulips in various areas of the site, which would add the interesting colour in spring and whose leaves should not prove a problem after flowering.
- The new orchard is an interesting and unusual idea. Perhaps it could be extended by planting various varieties of currants and even gooseberries among the trees.
- It might be possible to add some of the more robust herbs to bring in insect life and add further interest or even wild strawberries.
- An information board would be good to make clear what the area is and promote its use among tenants and even visitors. Perhaps it might be possible to add a seat so that people on-site could perhaps find time to come and relax in this lovely area.
- Would it be possible for tenants to come and pick some of the fruit or herbs?
- While, the alliums are obviously lovely would it be possible to install planting which would extend the flowering period and thus benefit wild life. Perhaps early nectar sources such as pulmonaria might be beneficial, or even, if space permits, hemerocallis or viburnum tinus would have the same effect and bring in butterflies and insects and thus birds in summer. Perhaps there might be space for one or two buddleias.

## **The Farm Shop at Cranswick**

**Gold**

### ***Overall Impression***

The entrance to this well used farm shop and cafe is enhanced by large containers of vibrant, healthy plants with lawned areas housing large outdoor toys. The patio area is furnished with tables and chairs made from recycled material.

Indeed, owner Adrian Fry, goes out of his way to source local suppliers and recyclable materials using paper bags for purchases and tyres and farming salvage for planters.

The wild flower area was impressive with its colourful display of a wide variety of plants. The wildflower area is delightful and a haven for wildlife. The interior and exterior areas were pristine and well set out giving an excellent overall impression. The summer bedding plants are locally sourced and the grass verge is planted up with spring bulbs

The backstory of his business was displayed on large boards in the shop which was filled with delicious and unusual local produce.

***Judges feedback on areas for consideration***

Keep up your excellent standards

Consider using some sustainable planting in the containers to cut down on watering

## **White Horse Pub**

## **Silver Gilt**

***Overall Impression***

This popular, dog friendly pub in the centre of the village is used for many local events.

It has a very good and colourful display of plants in tubs, containers and hanging baskets.

A large multi media screen in the extensive and quirky outdoor area welcomed the YIB judges.

All areas of this busy pub are clean and well maintained

***Judges feedback on areas for consideration***

There are troughs of healthy strawberries and various herbs, perhaps consider using these in the drinks and food.

**Category B3 – Large Businesses**

### ***Overall Impression***

Although originally deciding to enter Yorkshire in Bloom in 2020, due to the Covid pandemic Camira Fabrics only officially entered in 2022. Within the short period of time they have achieved a great deal, creating and transforming a space within the grounds into a tranquil area with sympathetic planting to enhance the nature of the site. Plant selection is good quality and varied with Ferns, Crocosmia, Goats Beard, Geraniums, Iris to name a few, complimenting the nature of the site with careful consideration to the colour scheme adding to the overall impact.

It was good to see that a management plan has been incorporated and acted on each year to show progression. 2024 also marks a special year for Camira as they celebrate 50 years in business. The company is also at the forefront in using environmental practices to produce fabrics from nettles, hemp and flax and using ocean waste to produce their SEQUAL fabrics.

### ***Judges feedback on areas for consideration***

- As mentioned in your year 4 plan. Remove some ferns and divide the crocosmia consider dividing clumps every three years to avoid overcrowding.
- A welcomed recommendation on the day was the addition of planters or a small border to the side of the entrance to the building or around the seating area, possibly incorporating examples like Carex oshimensis, Festuca intense blue interplanted with Allium Purple sensation, Cortaderia Tiny Pampa, all with low maintenance in mind but your preference around these examples of plants would be in keeping with the site and the building.
- Is there potential to add winter snowdrops and spring crocus and daffodils to add interest and colour to the site.
- Continue with your year 5 plan and giving over a section of the site to wildflowers or a bed for attracting pollinators for the bee box you mentioned, Buddleia's, Lavenders, Sarcococca confusa (Sweet Box) Teucrium chamaedrys (wall germander), Calluna vulgaris, Cistus criticus (rock rose), Cotoneaster, Pieris japonica, Caryopteris x clandonensis Mahonia, Ribes sanguineum are examples but your preference for the site would be a further and interesting aspect to the landscape you have.
- Be mindful not to expand too much to the detriment of this lovely space you have and the amount of time you have to volunteer to the maintenance. Small improvements along with the continued management of the main water feature will continue to make this a wonderful asset to the company.

## ***Overall Impression***

Visiting this unusual site was a really interesting experience. Obviously this is a site which is very much loved and there are great plans in hand for its future. Because of their nature industrial sites are not easy to work with and clearly great efforts have been made to do the very best for this one.

It is impressive to hear of the efforts that are being made to ensure that this site is wildlife friendly and encouraging biodiversity with wild flower beds, thus a wide range of birds, bees and insects on the site.

The use of an electronic seagull alarm call is a wonderful way to compassionately deter birds from visiting the site. Much of the other planting is chosen with pollinators in mind.

It was very pleasing to see wide scale planting of new trees around the site, which will hopefully benefit the planet far into the future. Allowing little wild flowers to remain in the mown grass areas will be very beneficial to wildlife.

All grassed areas and hard standing were well maintained and appropriate shrub areas well clipped. The dramatic use of many alliums will create amazing impact.

It is good to hear how well tenants are kept in the loop about landscaping work on site. Regular litter picking is done on site.

Chemicals are reduced as much as possible on site and there is little use of water.

It was good to see bird boxes on-site and to learn that many more have been ordered from the Horticap organisation. Much is being done by the site to support and help those in need in the community around it, which was wonderful to hear about.

## ***Judges feedback on areas for consideration***

- Further herbaceous planting is planned and it would be good to choose plants which could extend the flowering season once the alliums have finished.
- Additional art installations would benefit the site.
- Consider adding information boards to the larger wild flower areas to make visitors to the site aware of the good work which is going on.
- Consider information boards by the cafes on-site. A list of the plants and insects and birds which visit or find a home on the estate to make people aware of the good work.
- Consider wildlife planting other than native wildflowers. Cardoons are very wildlife friendly and would have a very strong architectural presence which would contrast with the clipped evergreens on site. Goldfinch have visited the site, they would love a few teasels in a wild corner.

## **Crystal Peaks Shopping Centre**

**Silver Gilt**

### ***Overall Impression***

Opened in 1984, the 40 acre Shopping Centre site is well maintained and litter free. It has many mature trees and shrubs with boards providing information on wildflowers, birds and pollinators. There are also established beehives on the roof which are well managed by a local beekeeper alongside provision for wildlife habitats, bird boxes, habitat piles and Martin/Swallow boxes on the building.

With 60 hanging baskets around the Shopping centre representing 60 years of YiB, each one impressively planted by individual employees, choosing their own colour themes. Both judges thought this was a lovely gesture from the management team to involve the centre's staff. Involving the local community in planting up the colourful fountain planters was also a good initiative.

Established pine trees and a wall of wisteria enhance the overall appearance of the centre. Plants have also been grown from seed in some areas. A walkway through a sensory garden with a seating area has been developed adjacent to one of the car parks, giving a calming place for both staff and customers to sit for a while.

The site is a credit to Joe and Alan whose enthusiasm and knowledge is reflected in the overall appearance of the centre and are well supported by the management team

### ***Judges feedback on areas for consideration***

- Show the history of the area, perhaps on a noticeboard. It would be really interesting to see how the area has changed and how you as a business have worked with the landscape.
- How you involve the local community and your employees with your planting schemes around the centre. Perhaps some photos at the entrances to the centre. You should be really proud of this initiative.
- Carry on with your idea of looking at and renewing some of the planting schemes. It will come to fruition. They are good ideas.

## **Fox Valley**

**Gold**

### **Overall Impression**

Fox Valley is a 28 acre developed site which was formerly a steelworks. Opened in 2016 it has over 30 stores including a supermarket. There are reminders of its proud heritage throughout the site, including a solid steel structure of Grandfather Fox on the entrance to the centre, together with a mural by local artist Peter Mckee.

The quality and choice of the planting was excellent, very bright and cheery providing year round colour and scent, with the trees around the various sections of the spotless car park, breaking up what could have been seen as a very imposing piece of tarmac. Not in this case! The trees are well maintained with the 60 baskets (to celebrate the 60 years of the RHS) hanging alongside them bringing in some really good summer colour.

To the far side you can find, very discretely hidden away, hedgehog boxes and bug houses whilst opposite is a very steep, well maintained wild area with an array of grasses and wild flowers. With a compost area, solar panels on the roof and rainwater collected, the team obviously work hard towards green sustainable initiatives for the site. The overall feel of the area, although a shopping centre is very green! Various events are held during the year including a food festival and Xmas lights switch on.

Overall an impressive entry, and the team led by Jodie and Abbie obviously take pride on the appearance of the centre and their efforts to involve the local community as much as they can.

### **Judges feedback on areas for consideration**

- A timeline of future activities on a noticeboard around the eating areas would be a really good addition to the centre.

## **Leeds Valley Park**

## **Silver Gilt**

### ***Overall Impression***

Leeds Valley Park is a large well planned area that accommodates business premises. The area, once busy and thriving is now quieter since Covid. Slowly businesses are returning. Leeds Valley Park is maintained by Nurture Landscapes. The standard is very good. They have responsibility for all the parkland including; road ways, parking areas and footpaths which were immaculately clean. The site is on a high elevation which brings with it additional challenges.

The multi stem birch trees and the use of compact shrubs broken up with perennial pink and white roses break up the green hedges. In some of the borders, red hot pokers and Lucifer has been added along with wild poppies. There are a wide variety of herbaceous shrubs and trees that give a clean and welcoming entrance to all the individual office complexes. It was really good to see the orchard.

Conservation and environmental responsibility form part of this team's ethos of working. They have moved over to all electric vehicles. Many of the electric tools used are now battery operated and they are continually researching further changes – working towards to further reduce their carbon footprint. The team use wood bark as a mulch, they have a number of areas which are planted with native wildflowers that are developing into meadows.

Composting takes place off site. There are bee hives – away from the main buildings. Planting in this area is being developed. Future plans include planting hornbeams and reviewing the hedges. The roundabouts contain hebes and lavenders. It is clear they are thriving and give a lovely impact to those driving into the area.

The pond, stocked with koi carp was impressive, a lovely place for those who work in the offices to take a peaceful break. The high quality of the work undertaken by this small team can be seen throughout the complex

### ***Judges feedback on areas for consideration***

- The area at the back where the raised beds are will be an asset in the future. The plans to hopefully grow vegetables and fruit which may be used in an onsite café or for workers in the area to purchase is good.
- Continue with the wildflower meadows.
- Is it worth creating an information board in the planted areas so that those working there can identify the plants etc.
- Bird/bat boxes weren't visible – they may be there but if not perhaps worth considering.
- Hopefully you are able to restore and/or replace the old bug boxes.

## **Market Cross Shopping Centre**

**Silver**

### ***Overall Impression***

Market Cross shopping centre is truly a hidden gem, nestled opposite Selby Abbey the centres fascias are limestone to fit in with the aesthetics of the town and the Abbey. The centre was built on what was the market and has managed to keep a local feel with a good mixture of national and independent shops all nestled together in this clearly vibrant space. All this complimented by some good floral displays make this a most on any visit to Selby.



I was pleased to see that you had an on site maintenance team that were responsible for the watering and maintenance of the planters, baskets and maintaining hard surfaces to a good standard.

### ***Judges feedback on areas for consideration***

- The plant quality around the centre is good however there could be better coordination of the colour scheme throughout the centre with regards to the planters and hanging baskets.
- Any new planting scheme could also take into consideration introduction of plants to boost Biodiversity of the site and possibly add some variation of colours and height into the planting .

## **Nidd Hall Hotel**

**Gold**

### ***Overall Impression***

The hotel is situated in open countryside, with the forty five acre estate adjoining farm land. The whole of the estate is open and maintained in various ways for guests to enjoy and undertake a variety of activities.

The provision of information boards of a very high quality provide information about the wild and plant life to be found.

The estate has many fine trees, wildlife areas and formal room gardens. Re-cycling is a way of life from creating garden shelters to fairy doors and the garden depot. Mowing programmes have been changed to encourage flowering plants in the turf and perennial planting is being used.

The small team are to be congratulated on what they achieve. Guided garden walks are promoted to guests to enable them to gain information about the estate.

### ***Judges feedback on areas for consideration***

- When and where possible it would be good to see some more tree planting to start and think of the need to maintain the landscape.
- A small point but the scale of the hanging baskets at the entrance are a bit small for the scale of the building bigger baskets could give a great impression to guests as they arrive.

The proposed maintenance programme for the courtyard and stable yard areas should improve these areas considerably.

## **Rudding Park Hotel and Spa**

**Gold and Category  
Winner**

### ***Overall Impression***

Set within the historic landscape the hotel and spa has been incorporated by blending landscape styles, drifting from the modern roof garden into the estate. The roof top garden being of special note for its mature and established appearance. The new arrival area at the hotel has been created in the estate style of quality materials and exacting details to ensure the semi mature trees not only survive but thrive. 100,000 bulbs were planted in the autumn in a change to grassland management which has seen areas of wild flower meadows being developed and this style of management is now extending to the golf course.

It is only possible to highlight parts of the garden as every corner produced new views and plants. So a highlight must be the kitchen garden growing over 150 crop types that are used in the restaurants. The range is incredible the cultivation to a very high standard and the level of production from a relatively small area is massive. Congratulations to Sarah and the whole team for working to deliver such a high standard of maintenance.

### ***Judges feedback on areas for consideration***

- Continue to develop the meadow areas and tree planting programme in keeping with the landscape.
- It would be interesting to have details of the crops in the walled garden but at a practical level I suspect this would not be wise as getting visitors not to try a leaf could greatly reduce yield so possibly best left to the garden walks.
- Should you come across a volunteer interested in nature it may be useful to record wildlife on site.

## **Sheffield Forgemasters Limited**

**Silver Gilt**

### **Overall Impression**

The modern design of the new Rolls Garden sits perfectly along-side the River Don in the heart of the Sheffield Steel Industry. Created to give Forgemasters staff an area for relaxing on breaks, it provides shelters with solar powered lighting, table tennis and boules area and seating spaces within high quality hard landscaping and a good selection of sustainable planting, good use of grasses to add texture and insect friendly planting. There was a small wildflower area, and bird and bug boxes had also been provided. The borrowed landscape of the river and its wildflower banking's was a bonus.

There were large planters along one of the main roadways in with a mix of sustainable and seasonal plants, and the Bee Friendly Garden at the main reception was something you wouldn't expect to find in this busy industrial site. The Staff competition to create bee homes was quirky and there were some fabulous designs incorporated into the site along with some locally made steel artwork.

### ***Judges feedback on areas for consideration***

- Consideration be given to the timing of the maintenance contractor prior to judging, a little additional weeding of the newly planted areas would have benefited the overall look of the area. There maybe keen gardeners within the work force that might like to get involved in helping to maintain this small area.
- Definitely include the "Bee Friendly" area in the overall judging route, it was good to see and excellent habitat for wildlife on the site, not everything needs to be overly maintained.
- The site has real potential going forward and if resources can be found to refurbish the larger green space on the site, this would be worth adding to the entry.

## **White Rose Office Park**

## **Silver Gilt**

### **Overall Impression**

An immaculate well-manicured lawned entrance greeted the judges in this small but diverse in terms of businesses office park.

The newly planted bug hotel planters were innovative with great sustainable planting softening hard landscaped areas.

Employees of the various businesses are spoilt for choice when taking breaks with several breakout areas adorned with deckchairs & seating.

Relaxed mowing is evident on banking which breaks up the mostly formal nature of the site.

The Chelsea Garden is still looking good with the water feature still operational & the original planting still evident.

### ***Judges feedback on areas for consideration***

- Consideration of a more relaxed mowing regime on banking towards the centre and the rear of the site.
- Consideration could also be given to the addition of swathes of wildflowers in the formal lawn areas to provide added colour/interest.
- An interpretation board for the Chelsea Garden would be a welcome addition for both employees, students and visitors of the site.
- The formal bedding areas of the entry could potentially provide more impact by increasing plant numbers, creating larger beds and using a wider range of plants.

## **White Rose Shopping Centre**

**Silver**

### **Overall Impression**

On an unseasonably wet day the judges were met by members of Nurture the management company who deliver the grounds maintenance contract for the White Rose Centre. A change in management will see Nurture oversee & deliver a 10-year management plan over the next 12 months which could see extensive improvements /enhancements for both hard & soft landscaping across the site.

At present it was good to see the obvious enthusiasm & care in the environment within the Nurture team to identify & enhance within resources areas of the site, the newly planted bed close to the petrol station was well thought out in terms of plant selection. The 'Green' credentials of the site are clear with rainwater harvesting & solar panels helping to reduce the centre's carbon footprint.

Overall, the site was clean & generally litter free given the popularity & usage of the facilities.

### ***Judges feedback on areas for consideration***

- A concise & objective 10yr management/masterplan currently in discussion would form the basis of prioritising improvements required to enhance the site.
- The trees within car parking areas are showing signs of crown deterioration. Thought could be given to reduce the number of trees in these areas given the extensive green canopy elsewhere on site (woodland). Thought could be given to using a range of shrubs in this area if root space is limited.

- The judges felt more seasonal colour especially around the public entrances to the centre could provide more impact. Perhaps consider flower towers, multi basket hangers and the use of mixed perennial and annual planters around the entrances.
- Scope for corporate volunteering should be explored given the large concentration of shops/businesses in the vicinity, the woodland area would benefit from collecting fallen wood & creating log piles for example as an exercise. The idea of businesses or shops sponsoring displays on the roundabouts is a promising idea.
- The Woodland Walk surfacing was under water in some places during judging, again consideration in the wider management plan should address better surfacing, possibly DDA compliant considering the desire to make the woodland more accessible to all age groups.
- Consideration could be given to some form of interpretation for the woodland to promote its use from the shopping centre visitors as well as the local community.
- The Client/Contractor relationship is key to the future development of the site & with this in mind the judges felt that ideas/proposals would be best shared and costed to be included in the imminent management plan.

## Category B4 – Tourist Attractions

### **Burnby Hall Garden and Museum**

**Gold**

#### ***Overall Impression***

Burnby Hall Garden is maintained to a very good standard and is sympathetic to its original designs. There are 2 full time and 1 part time members of staff supported by between 10 – 15 volunteers. The estate has received funding from numerous sources; Heritage Lottery, East Riding Council and private donations.

There are a number of different areas to explore when you visit; the upper of the two lakes has benefitted from being restored and now is well stocked with fish. Work will commence on the restoration of the lower lake later this year. There is a Birch Walk, a Secret Garden, the Aviary Garden, the Walled Garden and the Rock Garden. All are well planted and blend into their natural environment, The 'Stumpery' was inspired by the Highgrove example, here you can find Owl and bird boxes, log piles and bug hotels. The seating areas are clean and well maintained.

#### ***Judges feedback on areas for consideration***

- Just continue with the refurbishment of the lower lake as planned and increase the number and variety of the beautiful water lilies there as planned.

## **Filey Bird Garden**

**Gold**

### ***Overall Impression***

standard. I was shown around by the owner, Fran Holah, who explained about her family's vision to develop a field into a bird garden.

The initial planting of 80 young trees, whips, on the northern and eastern boundaries has now become a small woodland with paths and picnic areas providing a natural habitat for a range of birds/animals and offering a tranquil oasis for visitors to rest during their visit. The formal garden's centre piece is a raised pond containing water lilies with surrounding planted area being split into four quarters with each aspect having a different theme including roses in one and Mediterranean plantings with large ornamental grasses in another. This provides a range of interesting vistas that are impressive to see. The beds are well stocked with a variety of plants, including roses and shrubs and are well maintained. This area was, unfortunately flooded a few days before judging, but the team had responded quickly and the residual impacts were minimal.

Available funds have been invested in the continued development and upgrading of the gardens. Last year new central footpaths were installed and improvements made to the bird enclosures. Features like the 'Willow Arch' and the sensory garden have been a success, especially with children, with different environments, textures and smells proving for an engaging experience. Across the site, for example the wishing well feature, the sensitive use of bedding plants provides pops of colour which are eye-catching.

A large natural pond, which is sensitively managed so as not to disturb the habitats, which helps to drain the site and attracts a range of waterfowl species. Information boards are plentiful across the site and informative.

### ***Judges feedback on areas for consideration***

- The rose garden plantings looks sparse in places. The owners have this on ' their project list.
- Picnic table look tired and need replacing.

- Consideration should be given to the installation of bird and bat boxes, as well as a variety of bug hotels
- The potential of getting a local birdwatchers group to survey the wild birds at the site may provide an interesting perspective on the natural habitats.

## **Keighley & Worth Valley Heritage Railway**

**Gold**

### ***Overall Impression***

Running through the Worth Valley, a wildlife corridor, this entry consists of 6 stations each with their own gardens. Each station has no more than 3 volunteer gardeners who have to deal with a variety of difficult conditions, but it is good to see these being overcome. Their enthusiasm for the gardens and the Keighley and Worth Valley railway was plain to hear to and see.

Planting was very good with drought tolerant perennials such as Erigeron, Mallow, and Lavender being used alongside bright colourful bedding plants which provide impact as the locomotives pull into the stations, it was also good to see fruit and herbs being grown. Colourful hanging baskets and planters adorned each platform. Many of the plants were grown by the gardeners themselves at home and were of very good quality. Plants removed from hanging baskets were overwintered and where possible incorporated into other planting areas.

Much of the planting is managed pockets of perennial planting on the banking opposite the platforms these were well managed and incorporated areas of wildflowers. The judges particularly liked the use of recycled locomotive chimneys used as planters. The new mural masking the gas building at Ingrow West is in keeping with the garden. Grassed areas were mown where appropriate. Hedges around the stations were deliberately managed rather than manicured as befitting their surroundings.

The two picnic areas at Keighley and Oxenhope are little gems, featuring well maintained paths, seating areas, woodland and wildflower planting as well as more formal planting. Every station had a log pile, some had water conservation and others bird and bat boxes and feeders. All incorporate composting as routine.

The railway line, its stations and gardens have a uniform identity yet each garden has its own character. There is excellent communication via a number of Channels including newsletters, social media, leaflets etc. the railway gets funding from numerous sources but is also expensive to run so there is only a small budget for gardening. The gardeners work all year round and it was good to hear of future plans for each of the stations. It is clear to see that all the volunteers are dedicated and have worked very hard to improve the station gardens, which are a credit to them.

### ***Judges feedback on areas for consideration***

- At Keighley much work has been done over the last 12 months in the picnic area, could there be more signage from the platforms to draw visitor's attention to this. Within the picnic area perhaps an information board about the woodland area/ wildflowers/birds etc.
- Could more drought tolerant plants be incorporated into the various planting schemes. Mallow seems to grow well and perhaps some Lavenders, Erigeron and perhaps Rosemary.
- Where herbs are grown could you consider labelling them so that the public know what they are and perhaps a sign inviting the public to harvest them? This is already happening at one of the stations.
- Could the gardeners from all the stations get together occasionally, it would be useful to exchange ideas and resources.
- Might it be possible to use social media to try and attract more gardening volunteers, many hands make light work?

## Middleton Railway

**Gold and Joint  
Category Winner**

### *Overall Impression*

This railway has been continuously operating since 1758 with the first successful steam engine being introduced in 1812. Hence it is an important part of the history of Leeds. Since 1960 the whole sight has been entirely run by volunteers many of whom are very skilled capable and knowledgeable.

There is a good welcoming sign as you enter the car park, which is very clean and tidy, with some very good planting.

On display around the car park and in the museum are many steam and diesel engines and items from the industrial past. The station is well maintained with some good colourful planters. The bird boxes and feeders water barrels etc are all well maintained and demonstrate their commitment to the environment.

The line runs through an area of Leeds with woodland and green space for visitors and children to enjoy while providing a habitat for wildlife.

Progress is continually being made to improve the facilities and to introduce new areas and facilities for visitors. Information and communication are both excellent. The group have good relationships with the Council and many other groups which is essential to keep the railway going by attracting funding, support and more volunteers. It was so good to hear about the very many short and long term plans.

### *Judges feedback on areas for consideration*



- Little Moor Park a newly acquired area, is a lovely small park for the railway and the community with seating and information boards. However the tree coverage creates a very dark space which prevents plant growth (including the grass) so it is recommended that these trees be severely trimmed. This would enhance the whole appearance of site.
- There are many plans to increase the bio-diversity of the site including planting wild flower and hedging areas on the site.
- The general maintenance of everything is considerable and very well carried out and must be continued.
- It is important to ensure the growth beside the track is kept at a suitably low level so that the views from the train can be seen.
- Long term it will be beneficial to see the a pedestrian crossing and the railway crossing the road so trains can travel beyond.

## Mount Grace Priory

Gold and Joint  
Category Winner

### *Overall Impression*

. This is a truly beautiful spot. Lovely golden Stone work, fascinating. Ancient ruins and superb gardens make this absolutely wonderful place for any visit. It was lovely to walk along such well maintained paths and beautiful rich grass. The soft colors and the gentle richness of the lush planting created and the atmosphere of great peacefulness and were totally in keeping with the concept of an art and crafts garden, based on the work of William Morris. The new container planting the imports which have been added recently greatly added to the general richness of the Planting.

It's good to know that wild flower areas are being regularly improved and expanded. Included the new project of the King's Meadow. Hearing about the use of wild flower turf in certain areas was extremely interesting. It will be lovely to see the site in spring with the thousands of bulbs up the entrance drive and cyclamen, bluebells and snowdrops in the woods and around.

It was pleasing to discover that the healthy pest free condition of the planting on site is largely maintained by natural predators and minimal use of chemicals. It was impressive to learn about the innovative use of nematodes on site to control problems. Clearly, leaving seed heads on over winter will both benefit the predator population and also add a great deal of interest to the winter garden, especially in frost. Using genuine chestnut fences and using a local craftsman to do that greatly adds to the atmosphere of the garden.

It is good to know that the site has a group of loyal volunteers working hard with the dedicated staff to care for the beautiful gardens. It's good to know also about the well deserved the support that the site get from English Heritage and this can only ensure that the site gets better and better as the years go on. It was interesting and impressive to hear about the many different courses and tours and children's activities, which take place on-site and people must really enjoy it in this nice weather.

### ***Judges feedback on areas for consideration***

- If people come to look around the garden who have especial interests in gardens and plants perhaps give them a printed plant list that they could take away with them, even offer them a cheap ballpoint pen or pencil that they could make a note as they go round.
- Find out for sure if there are great crested newts in your ponds, which would be a special value thing. If so share the fact in your publicity and perhaps put a notice up somewhere so people know.
- Since the history of the site so important consider putting some kind of video loop in the cafe telling people about the life of the monastery and the monks.
- The chestnut fence is a special thing, consider putting a sign on it , telling people what it is and who made it.
- Consider putting in place audio tours of the monstrey ruins, which people could bother borrow, perhaps with a good size deposit and listen to ask they tour the ruins, to help to make it come to life.

## **Ripon Racecourse**

**Gold**

### ***Overall Impression***

The title of 'Yorkshire's Garden Racecourse' was not given out lightly as it was an absolute delight to be shown around. It was easy to think you are visiting a park rather than a racecourse with all the vibrant colour and beautifully maintained lawns. The seasonal bedding is a joy to behold and there are splendid planters all along the stadium frontage.

The hard standing areas were meticulously clean and the very numerous seatings are all maintained to a high standard. The site is also more wildlife-friendly than one might imagine. Providing 25 acres of hay crop for a local famer is an excellent example of a mutually beneficial working relationship and it was great to see and hear about the local Oystercatchers nesting on the stadia roofs! There are excellent and interesting information and interpretation boards, and the old 'Race Card House' has a living roof!

### ***Judges feedback on areas for consideration***

- Consider replacing some of the seasonal bedding with herbaceous perennials for more sustainable gardening - 10,000 to 12,000 plants currently used is a huge number.
- Perhaps consider highlighting the site's excellent eco credentials more (hay cutting and the huge composting operations and the race day 'Green Scheme' for example) with an information board.

## **Sutton Park Stately Home**

**Gold**

### ***Overall Impression***

Sutton Hall Gardens are only open to the public in July and August along with other one off events throughout the year. The gardens are maintained to a very good standard by the head gardener; Michael.

Hedging along the walkways have been neatly clipped along with the topiary bushes. The walled garden is no longer fully cultivated but does contain fig, pear and plum trees. The herb and kitchen gardens are both well stocked and used in the kitchens for the house and, to a smaller extent, the café. There is a good orchard, stocked with a variety of fruit trees with a wildflower area. The stumpery is planted with various varieties of ferns and hostas. The butterfly border is in full glorious colour. Seating areas are of a high standard and the whole of the garden offers a warm welcome to all entering it.

### ***Judges feedback on areas for consideration***

As Sutton Park is such a wonderfully varied and beautifully maintained garden, identification notices could be out of place and may not be preferred by the owners, as whilst open to the public at certain times of the year it is also a family home, but for the benefit of visitors possibly extra discreet notices would be helpful. for plant identification could be included discreetly amongst the enormous number of wonderful plants

## **The Himalayan Garden**

**Gold**

### ***Overall Impression***

Even a dull cold summer day could not spoil the pleasure of visiting this beautiful site and seeing the expertise and dedication of the staff . The amazing sculptures scattered all around the site make the visiting experience more enjoyable and exciting.

Everywhere on site the quality of the plants was excellent, there was no sign of pest and disease.

Weeding is done by hand without use of chemicals except where unavoidable. The choice of plants fitted with the Himalayan ethos of the garden .It was impressive to hear that the site has a butterfly conservation status and the butterfly garden, full of insect-friendly plants was obviously a valuable resource . It was wonderful to see and hear about the care which is taken by the Himalayan garden for nature and the amount of trouble that is taken to encourage biodiversity it was amazing to hear that this is taken to the lengths of planting hornbeam trees purely because they are said to attract red kites.

There is an impressive range of both birds and butterflies on site. Lakes contain newts and frogs and again every effort is made to help these creatures thrive. Frogs and hedgehogs take care of any slug problem which might be occurring.

The use of chemicals on site is avoided and the site is plastic free. The site makes their own compost, which is therefore peat free.

Water resources are protected as the site is wholly supplied by its own natural springs. Spring water is used everywhere on-site even the toilets and the cafe . Everywhere around the site, grass areas were beautifully maintained, as were all the hard surfaces. The regular winter maintenance and renewal of the path makes walking around the site a real pleasure .The amount of work, which the site does with charities and young people was very impressive to hear about.

The range of activities on the site is amazing and includes many exciting and unusual events. It was wonderful to hear about the events related to the local Gurkha community and see actual prayer flags, which have been brought from the base camp at Everest. The information center is a beautiful new resource, a lovely place to do courses and workshops, and the information pictures around are a wonderful way of making people aware .

### ***Judges feedback on areas for consideration***

- There are herbs grown on the site which are picked and used by the chef in the onsite restaurants, might it be possible to extend the range of herbs and make them available for members of the public to see and enjoy.
- Perhaps it will be possible to add more information boards, featuring wildlife which may be seen in the garden especially a board by The Butterfly Garden showing pictures of butterflies that people might see there also perhaps about bird species so that people will take more notice of these things as they go around the site.
- The arboretum was impressive and it was pleasing to see that the trees were numbered and that an information book is available back in the information centre about the trees. Perhaps it will be a possible to supply each tree with their own QR code so that people might scan the codes with their phones and perhaps be taken to a site where they could see information about that tree species .

- When planting new trees in the arboretum perhaps it might be possible to invite children from a local school to come and be part of it and celebrate the planting of the new tree or help with it. Doing that might encourage the children to become closer to and more interested in the natural environment. It's likely that having their own tree will draw them back to the site again and again .

## **Thorpe Perrow Arboretum**

**Gold**

### **Overall Impression**

Thorpe Perrow is a lovely place, full of beauty and peace, a place to escape for a time from the everyday world. It is a real treasury of trees and it was wonderful to see the efforts being made to grow and grow the wild flower areas on site. It was a real pleasure to meet such committed and expert staff. It was lovely to see the efforts that are being made to involve young people in nature, from the children's trail with lovely and entertaining art work to the efforts made to interact with schools and provide educational materials.

The range of maps and information booklets available to visitors was very impressive. It was pleasing to see the wide and varied events organised year round on site. Obviously great efforts are being made to make the public aware of the site. Having an artist in residence will really enhance the visitor experience. The Silent Space is a lovely feature.

It was good to hear of the hard work being done by hard working volunteers.

### **Judges feedback on areas for consideration**

- It was good to see the new signage but a few more signs simply pointing to the entrance and tearoom would be nice.
- Perhaps schools using the education area would benefit from some information boards showing the range of nature they might find on site.
- It would be nice to have some information boards near the wild flower areas with some celebration of them and information about butterflies and other pollinators visitors might see.
- Perhaps have an information board in the centre of the area with oaks celebrating the Queen's Jubilees and the coronation of King Charles would be a good idea.
- Perhaps launch a photo competition for photos taken on site in autumn or snowdrop time and include it in advertising.

## **York Racecourse**

**Gold**

## ***Overall Impression***

York Racecourse, situated centrally within the city of York, is one of the country's top racing venues. Across all areas of this large site, including 'behind the scenes', there has been investment in a vision to enhance the surroundings with floral displays for the benefit of racegoers and others who visit throughout the year for other reasons, such as weddings. The choice of plants reflects the purpose of different areas, with, for example, bedding providing colour and interest to the stands and other areas. Perennial and mixed plantings also enhance the site. Many of the plants are grown at their own nursery. The site is neat, tidy and well maintained.

Supporting and increasing on-site biodiversity and wildlife is undertaken within the constraints of operational circumstances, for instance by the creation of a wildflower meadow adjacent to the internal entrance to the stable yard. Environmental sustainability is at the heart of their operations with a strategy which includes an aim to be net zero by 2040. The garden team have links with local schools who visit the site for activities such as building bug hotels and surplus plants are donated to St Leonard's Hospice for their summer fair. Other charities are supported and staff take part in litter picks, 'Give and Gain' days etc.

This was a fascinating visit and it was wonderful to see the commitment of this not-for-profit organisation to enhancing their environment through the use of horticulture, while committing to developing sustainable working practices and supporting their local community. Great credit should be given to Zac and his team who have used their knowledge and skills to transform the site through the appropriate use of plants for the benefit of all who visit in different capacities.

## ***Judges feedback on areas for consideration***

- The gradual introduction of perennial and mixed beds in certain areas is to be commended and encouraged and the proposed climbing roses for the new 'South End' will provide an attractive background to outside seating area.
- County Stand Garden. It has been recognised that last year's attempt to surround this area with free-standing pots and tubs was not successful because of the exposed nature of the site and plans in the coming year to plant a surrounding hedge with trees then introduce perennial beds will address this issue.

# **Category C9 – Railway Stations & Transport Hubs**

**Beverley in Bloom - Beverley Railway Station**

**Gold**

### ***Overall Impression***

The Beverley in Bloom volunteers have created a floral extravaganza for visitors and residents using the Beverley Railway Station forecourt. The colourful baskets, boxes and borders make an excellent first impression creating a warm welcome. The perennial planting is well chosen for difficult soil conditions found here and will give all year round interest.

There is good partnership working with many different organisations including Beverley Town Council, The Rail Network Partnership, local schools and colleges and local businesses and excellent recycling initiatives including reusing the tree guards from the central avenue to the wildlife border. In addition to the railway station work, the volunteers are to be commended in looking after 80 floral barrels around the town and a further three gardens.

An excellent Yorkshire in Bloom entry.

### ***Judges feedback on areas for consideration***

- Clock Tower Square is clean, tidy and very colourful. The seats in this area are the responsibility of East Riding Council but perhaps the group could bring some gentle pressure to bear to bring the maintenance up to date.
- The baskets on the station building walls are maintained by the Town Council. Perhaps some discussion could be held about adding some trailing plants to soften the edges.
- Across the station forecourt, perhaps some signage would be beneficial to direct people to the wildlife area and also to highlight that the great work that the group is doing. Shout about the achievements you are making.

## **Driffield Railway Station**

**Gold**

### ***Overall Impression***

The railway station volunteers (part of Driffield in Bloom) encompass a wide range of skills and ages but all have the station at their heart.

The lavender border is well maintained and the platform planters are generally of a good standard.

There are interesting memorial displays for prominent and well-loved local people which are nicely planted and maintained. Overall, Driffield Railway Station gives a very good

first impression to residents and visitors and the volunteers should be congratulated on their efforts.

### ***Judges feedback on areas for consideration***

- Perhaps some consideration could be given to working in partnership with the WI Trefoil Guild to refurbish the rose garden which is looking a little tired.
- The sedum box under the sign could perhaps benefit from some new, more colourful planting.
- The garden at the back of the station was very colourful and is a nice feature but perhaps some thought could be given to controlling the ragwort which is becoming dominant.

## **Friends of Sowerby Bridge Railway Station**

**Gold**

### ***Overall Impression***

Sowerby Bridge railway station is an impressive example of what can be achieved by a small and dedicated group of volunteers. There is such a variety of small planting and seating areas it would be a pleasure to spend time on this station.

There is an impressive number of attractive planters around the station and on the platforms. There is a long history of gardening at Sowerby Bridge Station starting in 1928 which has been continued by the present Friends Group formed in 2010. There is also a number of small gardens which both encourage wildlife and reduce antisocial behaviour. Watering is carried out with water harvested from the roofs of the station and an adjacent factory.

The Local identity is reinforced by the use of Interpretation boards on the platform fencing giving information about famous people local to Sowerby Bridge and commemorating soldiers from Sowerby Bridge lost in WW1. There are also plaques recognising the sponsors of the planters and giving information about the history of the station and also about the work of the Friends group. The war memorial unusually placed in the station grounds hosts well attended Remembrance service.

The Friends Group has been effective in obtaining funding from a variety of sources, grants from the Ward Forum and Northern Rail and sponsorship for planters and water containers. from local companies.

### ***Judges feedback on areas for consideration***



- Consider putting an additional planting box under the information sign at the entrance to the station
- Implement plans for a bug hotel
- Continue to consider the practicalities of installing an ornamental telephone box where one previously stood at the entrance to the station, consider how this could be used.
- Continue with project to reclaim the telephone box bed outside the station.
- Consider ways to involve more volunteers and involve younger people. It was lovely to hear that the local nursery visit. Scouts or D of E volunteers may provide some useful help.
- Implement the plan to pave the desire line in the shrub border between the Memorial Garden and the entrance.

## **Hutton Cranswick Railway Station**

**Gold**

### ***Overall Impression***

Mostly sustainable planting in beds edged in white painted stone and mulched with blue slate makes an impactful impression. Included was a "YIB 60" bed planted up with Begonias.

Excellent choice of planting as there is no provision for water here. Bug hotels and compost bins are in evidence  
Planter with a railway theme enhances the area.

Your involvement with pupils from neighbouring schools volunteering may well spark an interest in gardening with young people

### ***Judges feedback on areas for consideration***

- Dead heading before the judges visit advisable.
- Perhaps the large sign publicising Yorkshire in Bloom could include details of how others could get involved.
- Persist in asking the rail company to clean up the tracks.

## **Todmorden Railway Station**

## **Gold and Category Winner**

### ***Overall Impression***

Todmorden railway station truly 'shone out' by the radiating passion of the volunteers to improve Todmorden environment. We particularly liked the replication of Studly Pike complete with graffiti at the entrance to the station.

We were interested to hear the history of the railway stations in Todmorden and to see the posters on the platforms which had been designed by local school children.

The beautiful display of planters and hanging baskets provide a lovely welcome to Todmorden.

### ***Judges feedback on areas for consideration***

- Watering is a problem for the far platform. Is it possible to harvest water from the shelter roof.
- We look forward to seeing the display on the station frontage being reinstated once the building works are completed.

## **Category C10 – Charitable Establishment**

## **Barnsley Hospice**

## **Gold**

### ***Overall Impression***

It was lovely to be met by such a welcoming team of the volunteer gardeners and some staff many of whom were wearing the famous Barnsley Hospice Orange. The Hospice is celebrating 30 years since it was opened, with some very beautiful floral displays and a living wall.

All activities revolve round the welfare of the patients and their families by providing a place of peace and tranquillity at a difficult time in their lives.

Every patient room opens out onto a lovely garden area which is maintained to a very high standard. There are many beautiful trees, shrubs and sustainable plants in the grounds, which enhance the annual bedding that certainly creates the wow factor. There are areas with long grass and wildflowers and some recently planted fruit trees. Bird feeders and nesting boxes are well placed and another asset to the site. The orangery with the well-stocked fish pond with the peaceful sound of running water is a wonderful area which is well used and appreciated.

Publicity is good and linked into the main site. Everyone is committed to providing the very best of patient care which includes the surroundings for the service they provide. Volunteers are an essential part of hospice care and are much appreciated.

### ***Judges feedback on areas for consideration***

- Finance is all raised by a well equipped, and dedicated fund raising team. They are committed to maintaining these lovely grounds and this must continue.
- Continue to introduce more bio diverse planting perhaps some information boards would add to the site.

## **Grow with Case**

## **Gold**

### ***Overall Impression***

Thanks to Sally, Richard, Alan and the other members of the team at CASE for an excellent tour of the facilities. Case Training Services is an independent charity based in Hull for adults 16 and above who have additional educational needs. The charity was founded in 1985 by parents and carers in response to the lack of appropriate provision in the area for individuals who had the capacity and desire to improve their opportunities in life.

There are a wide range of crops grown on the allotment plots which allows Grow members to experience the full 'from seed to plate' experience. Environmental issues such as composting and recycling are well covered. We were particularly impressed with the newly created pond area which looks very well established already and the hibernaculum to encourage frogs, toads and newts. The group have excellent working relationships with their neighbouring plot holders.

We hope that the community open day was successful.

### ***Judges feedback on areas for consideration***

- We look forward to seeing your future plans coming to fruition creating a wildflower area around the bee hives. Keep researching which plants will thrive best in this area and have a look at pruning the fruit trees sympathetically to reduce the shade.
- Continue to seek funding for a battery operated lawn mower to make maintenance around the site easier.
- We look forward to hearing the results of the slug project and finding out which deterrents worked best.
- Continue to work with internal and external funders to complete the larger staff shed project.

## **High Green Methodist Church**

**Gold**

### ***Overall Impression***

High Green Methodist Church is a blast of colour and an oasis in the centre of the village. The vibrant annual bedding display at the front of the church celebrates the 60th anniversary of the RHS. All the annual bedding plants are grown by the group. The grassed areas were well maintained setting off the small, planted borders and lovely lavender bed.

Moving round the church every possible space was filled with carefully tended borders with a mixture of mature shrubs and perennials. Having grown up on the site David knew each plant like an old friend. The location of the plants had been chosen to meet their needs and any new planting was carefully considered and reviewed to ensure its success.

The seats that had been introduced during Covid have proved to be successful with wedding photographers and to provide a quiet space for parishioners to enjoy the garden.

There are 5 water butts harvesting water from the church roof and buildings and numerous habitats including a small pond, bird houses and a newly introduced wild flower area. There is also a fabulous vegetable garden to the rear.

### ***Judges feedback on areas for consideration***

- Consider ways of involving more and younger members of the community. David and Janet have a huge wealth of gardening knowledge and a passion for gardening which will hopefully inspire new gardeners.
- Consider rejuvenation of the lavender border.

## **Horticap**

**Gold**

### ***Overall Impression***

. Horticap celebrates its 40th anniversary this year in which time they have had such a positive effect on peoples lives and continue to do so to-day with around 60 students. The skill of the staff and volunteers ensures students are involved in every part of the operation developing skills.

They now also have a maintenance service visiting sites in the local area. Over the years as funding became available the site developed into a plant nursery with a large catering operation and grounds that have been developed into gardens and wildlife areas. Water recycling and collection along with solar panels and the ability to re-cycle almost anything for them to use and save money is a way of life Skills include wood working, art, catering and shop keeping.

Harrogate is very fortunate to have this wonderful facility, again congratulations for forty years of development.

### ***Judges feedback on areas for consideration***

- There are plans as ever to develop more features, replace a glasshouse aerate the pond and much more as funding allows.
- The success of the kitchen garden could be advertised to visitors demonstrating the fact that it is only meters from growing to eating.
- Well done and a big thank you to the team for all the help you have given and do give to your students.

## **Northcliffe Environmental Enterprises Team**

**Gold**

### ***Overall Impression***

It was a pleasure to visit this beautiful vibrant , happy site on a lovely summer afternoon. The site was full of colour from lovely container grown plants of very high quality.

I was impressive to see the wide range of fulfilling and creative activities offered to clients on the site.

The amount of recycling going on on site was impressive as is the range of bedding plants grown on site to supply customers.

The water feature really added to the atmosphere of the site and it was good to hear about pond dipping activities carried out with local schools and rainbows. It was also good to hear about the importance of nature and biodiversity on site.

It was pleasing to hear that the site supports the work of other charities.

### ***Judges feedback on areas for consideration***

- It would greatly help the site and visitors to it, if it was possible to find a way to fill some of the potholes on the approach to the site.
- Perhaps a welcome board outside the site might be a nice feature.
- Consider the production of an information leaflet featuring the site's wide activities for visitors to the site or other interested people might be useful.

## **Ripon Walled Garden**

## **Silver Gilt**

### ***Overall Impression***

It was a great pleasure to visit this historic and beautiful place on a lovely summer day. The work which is being done with Evolve will greatly benefit the young people involved and it was wonderful to hear that Duke of Edinburgh projects are being carried out on site.

Obviously great efforts are being made to spread the knowledge of the garden in projects ranging from use of social media to leaflet drops. Events like the Spring Fair and Apple Day will do even more to make people aware and it was good to hear of the cooperation with the Workhouse Garden in Ripon on pressing apples for apple juice. Plant sales together with Christmas Tree and pumpkin sales are another good way to raise funds.

The beautiful gardens are packed with an impressive variety of healthy and flourishing plants. The various areas of the garden lead visitors on to explore. It was pleasing to hear that the site is getting support from the Northern Fruit Group and the National Trust.

The planting in the Weather Garden is impressive and the art installation in the centre really adds to the site. Leaving seedheads on over the winter will benefit wildlife. The new Sensory Garden has a lot of potential.

### ***Judges feedback on areas for consideration***

- Perhaps developing a nuttery would add to the variety in the gardens.
- Perhaps creating willow wigwams and tunnels in the grassy area recently opened up would increase the pleasure of children visiting the site. It might be possible to create a willow or mown maze on site which children would love.
- Plant lovers visiting the site would love it if there was a plant list. The QR code idea is a good one, perhaps begin creating codes for plants could begin with the 12 most interesting.
- The apple trees on site are old, visitors might be interested if an information board was possible.
- Consider use of plant labels..
- Investigate areas where the use of information boards might add to the visitor experience. Perhaps a board about the history of the garden itself and its development from the Bishop's Palace Garden might be of interest.
- Consider a chalkboard by the cafe detailing wildlife sightings.
- Consider adding interesting tactile items to the sensory garden such as gnarled tree trunks or tactile garden ornaments. Consider grasses for movement and sound.
- Consider seasonal treasure hunts for children in the woodland area.

## **St Gemma's Hospice**

**Gold and Category  
Winner**

### ***Overall Impression***

Upon entering this hidden gem, both judges were instantly taken aback by supremely high standards set here at St Gemma's. The on-site gardening team and volunteers should be justly very proud of themselves for what they've created here. From the labyrinth contemplative walk and fishpond to the superb water garden and manicured lawns – it was a real pleasure to walk around. The most perfect setting for quiet contemplation and reflection.

In addition to the beautiful formal gardens, it was pleasing to hear about the horticultural activities for day patients and to see a high standard of produce grown on-site for consumption at the hospice. Nothing is wasted either, with excellent composting facilities, plus the recent addition of several nest boxes, made by the patients, provides breeding opportunities for our declining songbirds.

There are some interesting on-going projects gathering apace, such as the former alpine garden which now incorporates raised beds and an expertly laid paved area which is wide enough to accommodate beds. We look forward to seeing the development of the relocated alpine area

### ***Judges feedback on areas for consideration***

- To make for easier maintenance and a more sustainable garden consider planting shade-tolerant ground cover in areas such as the 2022 Queen's Canopy bed and Path of Life garden. Examples could be hardy geraniums, Ajuga, Tiarella, Pachysandra or Oak Fern.
- Consider appointing a local volunteer birdwatcher to survey the site in Spring, Autumn and Winter. The site may well be used by several species not usually seen in local gardens. The local RSPB group or bird club may have a willing member. Recordings could then be used to illustrate an interpretation/information board..

## **Category C6 – Parks, Gardens, Cemeteries**

### **Barnsley Main Heritage Group**

**Platinum**

#### **Overall Impression**

The 7.5 acre site was taken over by this very enthusiastic and knowledgeable group of volunteers in 2016. It had become totally derelict, since its closure in 1991 hence it was a real challenge right from the start.

The group between them have many specialist areas of expertise which enable them to develop this site into an area which is a wild and safe area, while preserving its heritage which is of local and national importance.

At the time of closure trees were planted, but some were non-native and are now gradually being replaced. They were given the late Queen's award for volunteering in 2023 and planted a purple beech tree in her memory. The site was clean and tidy with the grass being appropriately mown.



A lot of work is done with community groups using the site with its little museum for educational purposes, and providing space for various group activities. The Phyto mining project with Brunel University is of particular interest.

The site is continually being developed in different sections and all beneficial to wildlife while maintaining many original features . Many native plants eg English bluebells and daffodils are being introduced. As much as possible everything required comes from the site or is from a recycled source.

This group is to be complimented on their achievements so far. with so many plans for the future, to make this into an even better community asset with a real haven for wildlife, and record of their heritage.

### ***Judges feedback on areas for consideration***

- With so many plans for the future it is very important to have excellent publicity and communication to raise the profile of all aspects of the activities of the group.
- Continue with the excellent work on obtaining funds from many and varied sources.
- Working with other groups can help to attract more volunteers from all walks of life to carry out numerous tasks to enhance and continue with the excellent work that is being done.

## **Cannon Hall Park and Gardens**

## **Platinum**

### ***Overall Impression***

The park and gardens here are a wonderful asset which are very well used and supported. Dan and one other gardener with the help of 18 to 20 volunteers do a wonderful job in maintaining these gardens to a high standard.

The formal part of the gardens produce the wow factor and are now having sustainable planting added. Many of its features are original with some lovey old trees, ponds and attractive stonework. The walled garden and greenhouse continue to be renovated and are used to their full potential. Fruit trees are a particularly interesting feature with so many original varieties growing in the orchard and the hot house.

The grounds and facilities are used to provide many activities and fundraising opportunities including weddings and many special events.

There is an excellent programme of educational events, especially in the school holidays, featuring many of the special features of the gardens and aspects of biodiversity.

All areas are clean, tidy and litter free. There are many very good attractive information boards throughout. The parkland is a wonderful open space with an abundance wildlife and is enhanced by waterways with cascades. It certainly does provide an area for health and wellbeing.

### ***Judges feedback on areas for consideration***

- The many lovely very old trees are a very special feature, and it would be worth finding out more about them and labelling them.
- Continue with education and providing activities to ensure the area is well used.
- Good publicity is key to the success of the park and gardens and continue to use social media.

## **Carlton Marsh Nature Reserve**

## **Platinum**

### ***Overall Impression***

The importance of this site to conservation cannot be overstated, this status falls into two parts. Part one is the active management of the site this includes water systems, woodland and meadow land. The management and physical work is largely carried out by dedicated volunteers.

The second part is the production of the modestly titled Nature History Report 2023 being the 48th these provide a detailed record of the natural world on the site. Recording unfortunately the decline of some species and the arrivals of new.

The meadow land has taken a huge amount of work but its now an important habitat for plants and a wide range of insects.

The deluxe bird and bat houses deserve mention for the skill in construction.

### ***Judges feedback on areas for consideration***

- Ensure that the forty eight years of records are safely archived ( currently archivists advise on paper in proper conditions) ideally in a place with access for interested parties.

- On the site continue the meadow work and evaluate the use of the cattle due to arrive in a few weeks.
- Congratulations and promote the work of the site to professional bodies to ensure they are aware of the resource and information.

## **Centre Vale Park - Garden of Remembrance**

**Platinum**

### ***Overall Impression***

We were very impressed by the high standard of maintenance which is being achieved in this public park. This is a prime example of “ if you are doing something, do it well.”

The grass plots were beautifully cut and edged off. The annual bedding was well selected and maintained. This garden is a credit to the council gardeners and the volunteers.

The Friends of Centre Vale Park work with council gardeners in maintaining the surrounding beds by splitting up herbaceous perennials to refurbish shrub borders at little cost.

### ***Judges feedback on areas for consideration***

- Continue to develop the wild flower meadow and sensory garden.
- There are exciting developments to be made in this area with the demolition of the old conservatory. It will be interesting to see how this space is used in the future.

## **Cliffe Castle**

**Platinum and Joint  
Category Winner**

### ***Overall Impression***

It was a pleasure to visit Cliffe Castle. Dan and the team are clearly very passionate about their work in the park – particularly supporting members of the very diverse local community.

The plant selection and plant quality in all the beds is excellent with much perennial planting. It is well-chosen to give a sense of the heritage of this once family home. All areas are very well-maintained, clean and tidy with beautifully mown lawns. The greenhouse is spectacular with an interesting collection of cacti, spices and exotic plants.

The 'Bog in a Box' project to educate about the benefits of peat bogs, the wildflower meadow, bee bench donated by the Yorkshire Wildlife Trust and the lavender border are excellent examples of an awareness of the importance of the natural environment. Regular Awareness Walks, including a 4am Dawn Chorus Walk, help local people to understand and appreciate the local environment.

Engagement with the local community is outstanding. Groups of women learning English in the natural environment, the Rock Wall Group, family days to enjoy the cherry blossom, Ecofest and work with local schools are all examples of activities throughout the year.

The team work well together and show a wonderful enthusiasm for the environment and for enhancing the lives of their local community.

### ***Judges feedback on areas for consideration***

- You have made a good start with the raised beds near the heritage orchard. Continue to develop these as a space for children and families to grow their own fruit, vegetables and flowers.
- Dan and his team are always looking to move forward with plans for the future. It will be interesting to see how the recently vacated "sheds" will be utilised.
- There are so many varied events taking place that the excellent communication and information must be maintained especially the use of social media.

## **Conyngham Hall**

**Gold**

### ***Overall Impression***

The grounds of Conyngham Hall are free and open for the public to enjoy, with thousands of established mature trees, large well maintained grassed areas which include a golf course, and lovely volunteer run kiosk providing activities and refreshments for visitors, of which the monies go back into the maintenance of the grounds.

The grounds are used for a wide range of events and activities throughout the year which is well advertised on their social media pages, and the parkrun event held on the grounds brings around 200 visitors every weekend.

Since last year the group have added the tree trail for people to learn more about the many specimens of trees around the grounds and can do so via a QR code or a physical map, the same with the heritage tour too. The new wildlife art work on the kiosk building is a nice touch too.

The work which the team do is a credit to the people of Knaresborough to enjoy, well done.

### ***Judges feedback on areas for consideration***

- Increase provision for wildlife further still by introducing bird and bat boxes to the many trees on site.
- During the judging tour we walked past Henshaws and were told about the work they have done with the group in the past, could it be beneficial to all parties to try re-engage those ties once more?
- Could there be any space within the grounds of the hall to create more wildflower areas?
- The empty area next to the established perennial beds at the Hall building could do with renovation.

## **Elsecar Park and Local Nature Reserve**

## **Platinum**

### ***Overall Impression***

. Elsecar Park is a beautiful mature park split into two areas. The bottom park has a more formal feeling with the dell walk, well maintained flower beds and the band stand and the picnic area which has made excellent use of the old paddling pool as a toddler cycle track. There is an impressive variety of newly planted ornamental trees including a Ginkgo grown from a cutting.

The active friends group which has been going for 20 years, fund and organise regular brass band concerts throughout the summer. They also sell bird boxes and fairy doors made by a member of the group and produce an annual calendar. They have also funded exercise equipment and are working towards a new balance trail. The Face Book group has 2000 members. The group has recently commissioned a set of stone statues at the entrance to the park which represent park users. The monthly gardening group also maintain the lovely wall border.

The top area of the park has a much more recreational feel. The well used café and the variety of facilities including public toilets and a changing places toilet make this a fabulous resource for both the local community and visitors from further afield. Every opportunity has been taken to access funding or volunteer time to ensure that the park continues to thrive. A new crossing and entrance had just been completed linking the park to the car park and the heritage centre. This was achieved with significant funding from the Active Travel fund.

The local nature reserve around the reservoir provides a tranquil space. The knowledge of the friends and the Ranger has allowed the habitat to be managed to support and encourage the wildlife in the area. It was interesting to see the sheep who are used to maintain the short grass on the reservoir banks. The duck feeding station allows the public to feed the birds while limiting the damage they cause to one area.

### ***Judges feedback on areas for consideration***

- Consider providing identification labels for the more ornamental trees in the park.
- Continue with the cultivation of the wildflower meadow in the nature reserve.
- Carry out necessary repairs to the fencing along the dam wall
- The annual bedding beds around the bandstand are in keeping with the history of the park but it may be worth considering replacing a proportion of the planting with herbaceous perennials to both reduce the costs and the workload for the parks staff.

## **Friary Gardens**

## **Silver Gilt**

### ***Overall Impression***

It was great to visit this lovely park on such a nice summer day when the sun was shining and the sky was blue. Obviously the people of Richmond are very lucky to have such a lovely park at the centre of their community.

The tower is obviously a wonderful, historical focus for the park. The chainsaw carving out of a dead tree in the park, featuring a variety of animals and other wildlife is a lovely addition to the park and works well with the historic tower.

It was lovely to see the Soroptimist's garden and hear the very touching story associated with it. Much credit is due to the volunteer who has looked after it for such a long time.

The expansive lawns were a lovely place to picnic and it was good to hear that the use of chemicals is really limited everywhere on site. Clearly there is a desire to increase biodiversity in the park. It is lucky that the park still has its own original iron railings which add to the character of the park. The vintage notice board, referring as it does to the

Borough of Richmond is a historic feature and it is good to hear that it will be refurbished along with the wishing well feature in the park.

The project to replace struggling rose beds with perennials is very interesting. Lifting the crowns of the trees by the railings has made a pleasing difference.

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### ***Judges feedback on areas for consideration***

- Perhaps some signage could be added about the story of the Grey Friars themselves.
- If a chance comes up to add further art work perhaps that might be linked to the Grey Friars.
- If possible the benches might benefit from a little restoration.
- It might be a nice idea to thin out the planting in the Soroptomist's Garden a little to give individual plants more prominence.
- If roses are going to be moved as has been suggested perhaps it would be a good idea to replace a substantial amount of soil to try to prevent rose sickness.
- It might be an idea to aim for a little more variety of colour and planting in the long bed beyond the war memorial, perhaps red white and blue.

## **Friends of Friarwood Valley Gardens**

**Gold**

### ***Overall Impression***

The judges were met by the volunteers eager to show us the best of this wonderful public park. The history and heritage of the site are at the forefront of the groups thoughts while providing an attractive and family friendly green space for all to enjoy.

Areas to note: the entrance way, with its seasonal bedding displays, "Friar" tree sculpture, interpretation boards, and the cherry tree avenue, which will look spectacular in spring. The Coronation Bed to commemorate KCIII Coronation & QEII Platinum Jubilee, the sensory gardens, long herbaceous borders and area around the bowling green. Interesting features through the park, the sponsored Rose beds, the nod to the towns Liquorice history, the tree art and the children's play area, and the events throughout the year, all adding to a very interesting visit.

Good to see the support from the Borough Council on judging day and the Ranger scheme offering additional support to the group 2 days a month.

### ***Judges feedback on areas for consideration***

- The group continue to seek funding for additional facilities, the new play equipment and the works in the historic Liquorice border will add to the site going forward.
- Discussions are being had regarding the future of the bowling green area and the Friends are part of those talks and how the site can be developed going forward.
- The works on the stumpery will be interesting to watch develop, and the plans to create a new welcoming arch way at the entrance from the main high street will be good to see.
- Lots of ideas for improvements and future events are coming from the group, all to the benefit of this park and with support from the local authority, maybe consideration be given to a Green Flag entry in 2025.

## **Friends of Monk Bretton Park**

## **Platinum**

### ***Overall Impression***

The Friends of Group are passionate about Monk Bretton Park and are fighting to preserve its history for future generations. The park layout is mainly open space with shrub beds , playarea to the top with openspace grass sweeping down to a ditch and pond to the bottom of the slope. The green space has been protected and maintained as it has evidence of Medieval and postmedieval ploughing with a team of Oxen which could have been lost if it had not been registered with the south Yorkshire archaeology service.

### ***Judges feedback on areas for consideration***

- It was reassuring to see the group's prompt action with regards to stopping demolition work of the boundary wall which dates back to 1673. The negotiations over funding which will run into £20000 plus are well under way and the rebuilding to wall should include some planting enhancements to the park entrance which is something to consider for the group to undertake next spring.
- The pond is a fantastic resource for the park once being a paddling pool now a vibrant wildlife pond which could benefit from bit of TLC with regards removing some of the willow/ foliage allowing the opening up the vistas behind the notice board which also could benefit from a revamp. The many events that the group organise during the year are fantastic, they range from litter picking, gardening and



an open area concert “Brass On The Grass” which is in-fitting for this Miners Welfare Recreation Ground.

- The team from the council over all keep the Park tidy with help from the group, however the grass cutting (back up team) that cut around the edges of the park need to up their frequencies as its clearly inadequate for a park of such historical local importance and detracts from the excellent efforts of the Friends Of Group.

## **Friends of Monk Bretton War Memorial**

**Platinum**

### ***Overall Impression***

Pulling up to the War Memorial the overall impression was of an extremely well maintained small area with a good mixture of formal bedding surrounded by a back drop of well maintained shrubs that were well manicured to cover the rear wall. The group mainly consists of 4-6 members that maintain the Memorial on a regular basis with help from over groups such as schools and the scouts on planting days etc. T

he memorial was surrounded by a fence with 96 poppies plaques on dedicated to a soldier lost in action all supported by The Barnsley Branch Of The Yorkshire Regiment.

The summer bedding was excellent and it was good to see that local businesses helped with supplying water in hot periods to help the plants thrive. The group has been in existence now for some 14 years and has undoubtedly made a massive difference in making sure that funding for improvements and ongoing maintenance has been available.

### ***Judges feedback on areas for consideration***

- The group may like to consider reducing the height of the rear shrubbed area to make maintenance easier and maybe removing some of the mid/ lower height shrubs to create areas that new planting could be introduced this could improve the biodiversity of the site.

## **Goldthorpe Railway Embankment**

**Platinum**

### ***Overall Impression***

In the heart of the Goldthorpe Community you will find the old railway embankment and tunnel which opens to the public 2 days a week.

There are 5/6 volunteers who have worked tirelessly over the last 8 years or so to transform what was a very run down area of land. Year by year considerable improvements have been made. They work closely with Network Rail and are considering extending the improvements further down the line. What was an area used for tipping rubbish can now be considered an asset to the community as a result of a lot of hard work.

Thousands of daffodils and forget me nots have been planted and improvements to the pathways allow wheelchair access. Rainwater is collected and used to water the plants and shrubs.

### ***Judges feedback on areas for consideration***

- Overall an asset to the local community and run by a group of enthusiastic volunteers. It's unfortunate that it cannot be more accessible to the community as it is only open for a few hours on a couple of days. Keep up the good work though.

## **Harold Park**

## **Gold**

### ***Overall Impression***

Harold Park located at Low Moor in Bradford is a park with a surprising number of interests and activities for the community to enjoy. Amongst these are fitness equipment, a play area, water expanse, colourful perennial borders, various wildlife and habitats and much more.

The park is exceptionally well supported by enthusiastic members of the Friends of Harold Park, who not only organise community events in the park but host a café with quiz nights, and also found time to develop and maintain a sensory garden. Without the "Friends" to help keep the park tidy, litter free and maintaining the interest and activities in the park, it wouldn't be the community hub that it is. Well done to all involved.

### ***Judges feedback on areas for consideration***

- The main park entrance is less enticing than it could be. I would seek the support of Bradford Metropolitan District Council to help with some tidying up of the gate lodge garden and further planting of the perennial border opposite.
- Consider the establishment of a tree trail around the park, which would create interest and also raise awareness of the variety of flora and fauna present.

- Doubling the size of the wildlife area in the Boar War Memorial Garden location would increase forage for bees, pollinators and other wildlife in the park.

## **Hillsborough Walled Garden**

## **Platinum**

### ***Overall Impression***

. When you enter the walled garden from the main road pedestrian entrance you are welcomed by the bright colours and shapes of the Herbaceous borders or as the Volunteers have named it The Monet beds. Nestled behind on a lawned area is an old pedal boat that has been repurposed as a planter. Then you pop through a little gate into the stumpery and a children's woodland walk and wildlife area. This is filled with bird boxes and feeders used by squirrels and plenty of birds. A border of shade loving plants are along a small border up against the side of the Makers shed that has been restored by age UK with the use at no cost to the group. This gives a good building for the use of the group and surrounding community.

Complementary planting alongside the Hillsborough disaster gates makes it a very good memorial area. The walled garden area has a very good selection of plants of excellent quality that give an outstanding impression and fill the spaces nicely. Two greenhouses help provide the plants that are grown for the gardens and plant sales. This event helps generate funding to help with ongoing projects. Local Businesses also donate some plants for these events also. Walking around the back of the walled garden nestled is a well set out composting area. Excellent renovations have been done on a number of benches in the gardens and plenty more waiting to be done.

### ***Judges feedback on areas for consideration***

- Completion of the Brick wall repairs at the end of the Makers Shed to enhance the area.
- Some plant supports or grow through frames for the larger plants.
- A bird and wildlife interpretation / identification board for the woodland walk area.

## **HMP Hull**

## **Platinum**

## ***Overall Impression***

. Despite an austere outside, the inside of the prison, and the welcome inside from Dave Wilson and Charlotte Mann, was warm and overwhelmingly positive regarding the benefits of the gardens and planting for both the prison inhabitants and staff combined, with a strong commitment to continue the greening programme.

This warm welcome was reflected by the Gardening Team members that were working in the garden who proved to be knowledgeable and justifiably proud of their work. Within the security constraints there were a number of examples of excellent planting, with the Islamic Garden in the multifaith area being noteworthy.

There are also a wide range of murals and sculptures around the grounds which add to a calming atmosphere. HMP Hull has gained the opportunity to work with an international expert in prison environments, which is a notable achievement.

## ***Judges feedback on areas for consideration***

The work and outcomes currently on display are exemplary, but ongoing work is acknowledged to keep up the standards set, this includes:

- Capitalising on the opportunity to work with Professor Moran with an aim of being established as a national trailblazer on prison environment management
- Continuing to (i) Focus on the wider mental and physical benefits of greening the environment (ii) Plan and develop the proposed wild roof and planted area in front of the residential block
- Increase the range of vocational NVQs offered and consider how course continuation can be supported if an individual moves mid-course

## **HMP New Hall**

**Gold**

## ***Overall Impression***

We were met with colourful seasonal planters and baskets as we entered the complex which gave the wow factor to the start of the visit. All areas were well maintained, lawns cut, shrub beds well planted and the added benefit of the mature trees throughout the site gave a pleasant environment for those that use these spaces.

The Gardens team were working hard to improve areas and thinking about future projects, and the judges were impressed with the horticultural skills being developed on site. Access to greenhouses and polytunnels for growing plants and vegetables for use within the gardens and mess kitchen is a real positive.

The areas that had been given over to a more relaxed maintenance, longer grass's, wildflower areas, (the surprise Bee Orchids), the area along Governor's Walk are areas to

note, and the shady area with its mature tree line, wet areas and borrowed landscape beyond, gave a pleasant, quiet area that gave a real feeling of calm to the site.

Overall it's a credit to those involved.

### ***Judges feedback on areas for consideration***

- Maybe consider soft fruit growing between the polytunnels, potential to grow fruit such as raspberries, currants and gooseberries, either direct into the ground or raised planters. Also be able to grow small fruit trees here, trained on framework to limit the size and make for easier maintenance.
- Discussions were being had around composting and how this can be improved across the site.
- Consideration could be given to the area where the Bee Orchid was found, a reduced schedule of mowing in this area, may produce more next year. Maybe some sort of interpretation board to give information about the orchid, to those passing by, would be a nice touch.
- The wetter area down by the Governors walk, definitely lending itself to a bog garden, consider plants that will thrive in damp shaded areas to enhance this site, this will in time increase wildlife to the area too. This area has a real calming /well-being feel, is their potential to increase its use for residents.

## **Keighley Civic Centre**

## **Silver Gilt**

### ***Overall Impression***

The team are working hard to enhance the front of the Civic Centre to make it attractive and welcoming. The plants in the barrier baskets and hanging baskets are well-selected to blend with those in the square and along the street opposite. The plant quality is very good, and the plants are maintained to a very good standard. The Council has a bee-friendly policy, so all planting has to be attractive to pollinators. The planting is replaced in the autumn so that there is year-round interest.

The front of the Civic Centre has blue heritage railings and a blue post box, which the Council team are stripping and re-painting to return to their former glory. The area is clean and well-maintained.

The team is enthusiastic and keen for the Civic Centre to be eye-catching. It was a pleasure to meet you.

### ***Judges feedback on areas for consideration***

- Keep up the good work on renovating the railings.
- Consider incorporating some perennial planting in the barrier baskets and hanging baskets while still keeping the wow factor.
- The small notice board at the entrance to the Civic Centre would be ideal to promote yourselves and Yorkshire in Bloom.

## **Keighley Town Hall Square**

## **Platinum**

### ***Overall Impression***

This entry certainly has the wow factor and creates a real eye-catching feature in the centre of the town. This year it commemorates “D Day” with the words “Lest we forget” “D Day” and “80” planted into 2 flower beds in red, white and blue. There are also several very colourful beds in the garden, and at the base of the trees in the square.

Not only is there this wonderful display of bedding, permanent planting is also used to great effect and is bee and butterfly friendly. The edges of the square are planted with permanent plants and children’s sunflowers. There was good evidence of all year-round activities with some lovely spring planting.

The whole area was very clean and litter free. The planting was totally appropriate, of excellent quality and extremely well maintained.

The square is well used and really appreciated by the people of Keighley.

We were given an excellent informative tour of this area by Steve who is very enthusiastic and dedicated. He not only maintains this area but also works with and supports several schools.

All plants are sourced from a local nursery.

Communication is good using local sources and social media as appropriate.

### ***Judges feedback on areas for consideration***

- This entry is of a very high standard and should continue.
- Perhaps some information boards covering environmental issues would be helpful.eg Bee corridor and suitable planting.
- It is always good to get more people, possibly volunteers involved.

## **Knaresborough Castle**

**Platinum**

### *Overall Impression*

## **Knaresborough Castle**

### *Judges feedback on areas for consideration*

Increase provision for wildlife further still by introducing bird and bat boxes to the many trees on site.

## **Lister Park**

**Platinum**

### *Overall Impression*

A sunny day crowned a very enjoyable and interesting visit to Lister Park. With an abundance of features to see and experience, all well maintained and clearly respected and appreciated by the local community.

Of special note were the botanic gardens with its plant variety and colour and the Mughal Water Gardens a spectacular feature with canals and fountains. Although much of the park has a formal landscape, some areas have a relaxed maintenance regime to promote a wider variety of flora and fauna. This is also supported in other ways where perennials have replaced seasonal bedding, bird boxes placed in trees and a duck nesting box on the lake island. A close working relationship with the educators and staff at Cartwright Hall located in the park, see the young and old given opportunity to enjoy workshops and activities focused on sustainability and biodiversity.

Congratulations and well done to the team who keep the park looking at its best.

### *Judges feedback on areas for consideration*

- The development of a tree trail in the park should be considered, to help educate and inform. This could fit alongside the existing Historical Trail encouraging exploration of the park.

- With the variety of roads and paths present in what is a very large park, opportunity should be taken to develop a map showing the walking distances between each major feature. This would compliment the current weekly park run.
- Currently the Friends of Lister Park have a limited presence associated with practical support in the park. Engaging the friends with tasks to help the park staff would be of benefit to both groups.

## **Pannett Park**

## **Platinum and Joint Category Winner**

### ***Overall Impression***

Pannett Park has a very active Friends of group fully involved with the parks management and able to attract outside funding and muster the volunteer sector to help with projects.

The Park being an outstanding place to visit whilst on your visit to Whitby that could take up the best part of a day to explore fully. The parkland is full of interesting features to explore such as the Turtle trail, Jurassic Garden, floral clock, art in the park trail, rare trees, formal gardens, excellent play area and a fantastic museum at the heart of the park. You get views of the Harbour and Abbey away from the bustle of the crowds with a chance to find out the origin of Whitby Jet and get up close to the very tree that over a odd couple of million years created jet.

### ***Judges feedback on areas for consideration***

The commemorative archh needs some attention as it is showing some sign of movement to two of the wooden arches opening a gap next to one of the glass insert's.

The leaflets for the walks around the park were available from the café and museum, however you might like to consider making some available in the book cabinet for people that may visit out of Museum opening times. .

The floral clock numerals are suffering from Box blight and are being treated with fungicide as a control measure, however as a contingency plan it may be wise to grow-on box stock plants so the numerals can be replaced if the fungicide is not affective.

## **Roberts Park**

## **Gold**



## ***Overall Impression***

This is a lovely and historic park graced by a large number of splendid mature trees, a lovely place to visit on a summers day.

The Friends Group are certainly doing a great job in supporting the park as much as possible and are using social media in a valuable way to recruit volunteers and make the community aware of their activities. The work of the Friends to fill the bandstand with music on summer Sundays is very impressive. It was good to hear about all the activities in the park, which are many and varied.

The park must be lovely in spring with the many cherry trees and planting another row of young trees near the grassy area will bring even more spring colour. The return of cannons to the park was a huge and worthwhile project and everyone involved should be proud of restoring the park's heritage. The large grassy area is a really great feature of the park, valuable in so many ways and the Cricket Club which forms part of it is yet another lovely feature of interest.

The cafe is lovely and so well placed and people can sit in the sun with a coffee and look out over the grass.

Choosing shade resistant roses for planting was a good idea.. Leaving areas in a natural condition will greatly benefit wildlife. Allowing brambles to block bankings being damaged by bicycles is a good eco friendly solution.

## ***Judges feedback on areas for consideration***

- Perhaps it might be a good idea to add some information boards to areas of interest, by the cannons, near the statue of Titus Salt are two possibilities. Perhaps a board explaining why the llama statue is there would be another idea. It might be a good idea to have an information board next to an area left for wildlife is like that and perhaps giving some details of wildlife found on site.
- Perhaps if approached the cricket club might feel able to enable local children to have a chance to play the game.
- It might be an idea to place some planters on the raised area around the statue of Titus Salt to create a flowery centre point and to bring in butterflies and other pollinators.
- Perhaps planters could be placed outside the cafe for the same reason, perhaps including lavender for people to enjoy as they sit.
- The continued planting of new deciduous trees is a great idea. Perhaps consideration could be given to introducing new trees which will bring autumn colour into the park.

## Royston Canal Group

Platinum

### Overall Impression

This small but fully functional group have over the years transformed this 1 mile section of canal from a mainly dry past industrial scar on the landscape mis-used and unloved, into a thriving wild life haven stocked with fish that has become a sustainable ecosystem in its own right. There are 40 fishing platoons which have been funded by Yorkshire Wildlife Trust and are maintained by the group, along with several hundred metres of fencing and benches.

### *Judges feedback on areas for consideration*

- It was good to see the ongoing maintenance of the trees etc over hanging the tow path and platoons.
- The antisocial behaviour that you indicated was a problem of late, you could look at working with the local schools / youth groups in partnership with the local policing team to raise awareness of the environment. Hopefully this could be done via help with litter picks, some small cutting back work on the tow path and such as fence painting.
- Wild life talks would also fit nicely with the schools and could if scheduled in help the schools us the resource.

## Sandringham Park

Platinum

### Overall Impression

. All around the perimeter of this well-loved area of greenspace is a haven for wildlife. Children and adults alike can explore the hidden spaces with winding paths alongside and under the mature trees. The volunteers love of wildlife is evident with bird boxes and insect houses around the site along with hedgehog houses which are placed in the very dense thicket of blackberry bushes. Owls and Foxes are also regular visitors. Decaying logs and woodpiles all provide useful habitats for our 'smaller creatures', which in turn provide a food source for the 'larger' inhabitants. Brilliant example of biodiversity.

The group have worked closely with the local youth club creating areas in the park where young people can meet up, and what was once an area which was blighted by anti-social

behaviour has become a very popular area for local residents, which was apparent when the judge visited.

The small areas of planting are well maintained and provide colour throughout the year.

The group have a Facebook page and the noticeboard which displays their YiB awards alongside their Greenflag status informs the local community of up and coming events such as their annual 'Big Lunch'. This is a fantastic event involving a number of local businesses to bring along food. This small but very dedicated group of volunteers is led by Kazia Knight and she has helped the promotion of single use plastics not only at the parks events but also in the town of Wetherby.

With a new playground planned and funded for in the near future, alongside a new wildflower area, Sandringham Park is indeed a park 'going' places.

Well done to you all!

### ***Judges feedback on areas for consideration***

- Build /enhance on the floral areas at both entrances ensuring all year round colour. These will, in future, create a really welcoming sight.

## **Sheffield General Cemetery Trust**

**Gold**

### ***Overall Impression***

Entering through the grade 2 listed gate house in the portico is the Sextons Lodge an air b&b accommodation that has been fitted out with 19th -century lighting and antiques. The Victorian cemetery with over 87.000 burials is a grade 2 registered parkland and nature reserve. Originally designed by Robert Marnock in 1836 it is laid out with serpentine paths in a gardenesque style. From entering the first planting scheme the Psalm 27 garden which was a RHS Tatton show exhibit was gifted to the cemetery and worked in to the landscape to give an area of protection and reflection. From the formal the planting scheme starts to blend down to informal planting. Walking along a path at the side of the catacombs with selected wildflowers growing along the tops to a stone spiral to demonstrate geology of the stones used in the headstones. A wildlife area and pond created by the volunteers that harbours an excellent selection of flora and fauna.

A good number of volunteers work on the site and information is available on many noticeboards around the cemetery at all the entrances. Monthly history tours and nature events are also carried out by knowledgeable volunteers. Many grade 2 listed buildings are also within the cemetery one of which is the Samuel Worth chapel set in the heart of the nature reserve. The venue is hired out for concerts, parties, community events and

cinema shows. It is also licensed for weddings. Maintenance of the large grass areas, paths and any arboricultural work is carried out by the council. Sheffield General cemetery Trust (SGCT) has been chosen by AVIVA and match fund donations give, Very good communication of events in the cemetery is covered by leaflets, various social media links, news letters and webpage.

The cemetery is well maintained to a good level where it is safe and accessible to do so. Very litter free and a respected area by local resident passing through and using the open areas to socialise and enjoy.

### ***Judges feedback on areas for consideration***

- Continue with future plans to enhance this area and help keep it to the standard achieved.
- Maintenance to the Orchard area and an interpretation board of the varied varieties it holds.
- New work carried out around the memorial to enhance this area more.

## **Spa Gardens - Ripon**

**Gold**

### ***Overall Impression***

. Superb floral displays, fine veteran trees and well-maintained historical features all combine to create a welcoming and extremely pleasant getaway at the edge of the city. The judges were particularly impressed with the 'Bailey Bridge' bed which was a beautiful commemoration of the bridge used during the D-Day campaign built by many engineers from Ripon.

The community bowling green is a triumph at a time when many greens are either closing down and/or clubs are struggling to maintain them.

The recently-opened café is already a valuable asset and its ethos of using local produce and recycling wherever possible is admirable.

The original bandstand and the statue of the Marquess of Ripon are fine examples of parkland from a bygone era.

Very well-maintained grassed areas, multi-stemmed cypress trees and the novel Alice In Wonderland tree provide safe and engaging play and recreation space for children.

### ***Judges feedback on areas for consideration***

- It was interesting to hear about the proposed development of the old Ripon Baths building and how it could potentially fund the resurfacing of the footways within the park. Perhaps mitigation agreements could be extended to upgrade the bandstand roof.
- Consider filling up some of the open areas within the herbaceous/shrubbed borders with shade tolerant ground cover to reduce the need for weeding.

- Perhaps consider an occasional maintenance partnership with the Skell Valley Project (regularly involved in Ripon In Bloom) to cover any lapses in frequency brought on by the removal of on-site staff.
- Consider applying for Green Flag status. The park has all the attributes.

## **The Rose Garden, Mortomley Park**

**Platinum**

### ***Overall Impression***

.The entrance to the park is a nice addition highlighting the achievements of Friends of High Green group.

The rose garden has been supplemented by planting a range of annual and perennial plants to give year-round interest. The old roses smelled beautiful in the sunshine between the showers.

There is an impressive amount of new tree planting. The orchard planted with local school children in 2017 is thriving. A mini arboretum creates a memorial to the late Queen as part of the Queens Green Canopy, with a variety of ornamental trees each chosen by a member of the group. This area is also underplanted with wildflowers and bulbs. 50 native whips donated by the South Yorkshire Mayor have the field boundary together with 10 additional trees to celebrate 60 years of the RHS. There is also a WW1 memorial tree and a talented member of the group has also painted the groups tool container as a remembrance tribute which has stopped the previous graffiti and vandalism.

The park is well used by the community and regularly litter picked by volunteers. An annual Gala is held to further promote the park.

### ***Judges feedback on areas for consideration***

- Consider providing a notice board or signage on site explaining the tree planting. Possibly pictures to enable the identification of both the native and ornamental trees.
- Continue to extend the tree planting along the boundary
- Continue to consider ways of getting more and younger people involved.

## **Valley Gardens Harrogate**

**Platinum**

### ***Overall Impression***

. The judges were impressed by the high standards of presentation at Valley Gardens and commend the staff and volunteers who keep the gardens in such good condition.

At the heart of Harrogate, Valley Gardens form a significant green space and key attraction for the town. The Grade 2 listed gardens feature an impressive variety of well-tended beds and borders planted with annual and perennial plants as well as mature shrubs and specimen trees. The number of historical buildings in the gardens are regularly used by visitors for educational and social activities. The natural springs and wells, for which Harrogate is famous, have been successfully incorporated into the design and layout of the gardens.

There is also a good balance of other features such as play areas, a skate park, and a model boating lake all of which are valuable assets to the local community. The gardens have strong links with the local community and are well supported by the friends group who volunteer in the garden as well as arrange fundraising events for the benefit and enhancement of the gardens. Friends of the Gardens have recently developed an impressive world tree trail for visitors which greatly adds to the range of activities..

### ***Judges feedback on areas for consideration***

- While many grassed areas in the park have been left uncut there is a limited range of species present in the swards. There is an opportunity in these areas to increase the species mix and reduce the grass coverage. Additional signage in the park would help inform visitors as to the reasons for the wilder planting and reduced mowing regime.
- Whilst it is fully appreciated public parks and gardens should be available without charge and a means of income generation has been considered. The early introduction of a method to donate funds on the day of visiting the gardens, for improvement projects should be introduced as early as is possible. With a reputed four million visitors to the gardens, even small donations to the Friends Groups projects could prove to be very worthwhile.
- The interpretation boards in Valley Gardens are well placed and informative, however there is an absence of accessible interpretation for visually impaired visitors. There are opportunities to incorporate or add braille or raised print into future signage, especially with the upcoming development of the new rose garden.

**Wilthorpe Park**

**Platinum**

### ***Overall Impression***

. Wilthorpe Park covers 8 acres of green space in the Old Town ward of Barnsley. It is run by an enthusiastic group of volunteers. In August 23 the volunteers won the King's award for Voluntary service, an MBE for volunteer groups and in April 24 were presented with a crystal by the Lord Lieutenant of South Yorkshire.

Several well attended events are held throughout the year, Halloween, Mother's Day, Pictures in the Park (films). Sponsorship for the park has been provided by ABODE, with a local company providing funds for 12 trail posts around the park. A variety of trees have been planted including 20 fruit trees. The 3 sets of gates were also refurbished with the help of local funding. Funding has enabled the purchase of essential gardening equipment. A newly created raised bed by one of the entrances was funded by the local Co-op. The volunteers have good connections with local schools. 500 crocus bulbs were planted with the park refused by the schools for learning.

### ***Judges feedback on areas for consideration***

- Overall the park is an asset to the community with a mixture of perennial and seasonal plants bring colour to the park with events held throughout the year.

## **York Cemetery**

## **Platinum**

### ***Overall Impression***

. York Cemetery, situated close to the centre of the city, is an oasis of calm and tranquillity and a haven for wildlife. Established in 1837 and now occupying a site of over 24 acres, the cemetery environment is substantially managed in a naturalistic manner, albeit also including a rock garden, a fernery, a herb garden, an orchard, a perennial border and a substantial number of ornamental non-native trees in addition to native species. Whilst maintaining its original purpose as a place of rest, this approach has in effect created an urban nature reserve and a peaceful space open to all. The use of bulbs such as snowdrops, daffodils and crocuses extends the seasonal interest on the site. The Friends of York Cemetery provide voluntary support by way of regular monthly task days in maintaining and developing the grounds alongside three groundsmen. They organise and run a wide range of activities open to the public. Additionally, self-guided trails encompassing military and social history as well as environmental topics are available in printed form as well as downloads from the Cemetery website.

Local schools, universities and colleges are able to use the grounds as a resource for varied projects, and businesses are encouraged via York Cares to allow employees time off to volunteer at the cemetery.

The Friends group includes not only local members but those from further afield who choose to support a place which is of special interest to them, with approximately 500

members. Income is also generated from ticketed events, grant applications and donations.

Communication of their activities is via traditional methods enhanced by use of the cemetery website and Facebook page.

What a fascinating and unexpectedly welcoming place to visit. The volunteers who have supported the trustees in initially rescuing this site from dereliction and who continue to support them in maintaining and developing the use of the cemetery for the local community are to be praised for their hard work and commitment. Their efforts will surely be appreciated by all those who visit.

### ***Judges feedback on areas for consideration***

- Apple picking. Will there be signage in the orchard to say that the public can pick apples? Perhaps some apples could be contributed to a local food bank?
- The Scented Walk has become overgrown and it was good to hear that plans are afoot to renovate this area. Similarly with the Fernery where work is already underway.
- Might local schools or colleges be encouraged to undertake wildlife surveys, either of their own design or taking part in local or national initiatives?

## **York Museum Gardens**

## **Platinum**

### ***Overall Impression***

. The York Museum Gardens continue to thrive and develop from its original conception in 1840 to what we see today.

The gardens cover approximately 10 acres and have been divided into specific areas; wildflower area under the apple trees, an area for dry shady plants, a butterfly garden along with an edible garden to name but a few.

The garden is maintained by two full time and three part time gardeners. They are supported from Askam Bryan and York Colleges with students on placement. Also SEND students work in the garden along with five volunteers.

The garden is a bio diverse environment, eco-friendly, full recycling takes place and it is peat free.

A pleasure to visit this peaceful haven for both residents and tourist to this busy city.

### ***Judges feedback on areas for consideration***



Hard to find any areas of improvement in such a beautiful garden. However as there are so many different and beautiful plants more discreet signs could be help . Possibly more signage

## Category E1 – Young Peoples Award

### **Birkwood Primary School**

**Gold**

#### ***Overall Impression***

The impressive factor is that the gardening programe provides for all 300 pupils to take part and experience the activity. Being able to carry on this activity with major building work going on which has restricted access to the gardens and taken over certain areas is a credit to everyone involved.

Dealing with these difficulties has still allowed the growing of a range of crops enthusiastically demonstrated by the group of pupils who conducted my tour. Well done and with work nearly completed new opportunities are developing. The creation of the map wall illustrating historical events and people relevant to the area is unique in providing children with a sense of place.

#### ***Judges feedback on areas for consideration***

- Continue to ensure you gain as much fence material from the builders before they leave site.
- See if the Wi-fi can be extended to reach the garden.
- Complete the repair/replacement of the wooden planter in the playground.

Try to ensure areas being returned from the builders are in a reasonable state to allow them to be used for the garden developments planned.

### **Church House Pre-school**

**Silver Gilt**

#### ***Overall Impression***

The Little Bloomers of Church House Pre-School eagerly presented their community vegetable garden to the judges, identifying their thriving strawberries, beans, lettuces, and companion flowers, showing the educational purpose of the garden. Claire emphasised the importance of the raised beds and how they teach the children about fruit and vegetables and healthy eating.

More vegetables and flowers were planted in upcycled planters within the pre-school grounds, including a train planter that suits the young age of the Little Bloomers. Claire explained that the seeds from the flowers and vegetables are collected and resown each year which not only sustains the group's planting, but also teaches the children about plant lifecycles and growth. A colourful boat planter on display near the church was a treat to the eyes. Judges appreciated the choice of shade-hardy plants for the seasonal display to make the boat stand out as a landmark within Mirfield.

The group also showed their new 'dead hedge' and orchard trees, which attract insects and teach the children about the environment. Along with the bug hotel, the hedgehog highway, the bat boxes donated to the Graveyard Gang, DIY projects using old pallets, the recycled poppies from pop bottles and tree made from yoghurt tops, and the community library box, this group of children learn a lot from their work and should be proud of what they have achieved so far.

### ***Judges feedback on areas for consideration***

- The community vegetable garden is an excellent addition and educational resource for the children. Keep up the amazing work with these, and possibly consider growing some different vegetables to teach about the wide range of veggies available.
- Continue with the dead hedge – this is a fantastic project, and judges can't wait to see how it progresses. It may be worth speaking to the town council about additional fruit trees for this area, as well as funding for any other small projects.
- The use of milk bottles recycled to use as watering cans is a fantastic idea. Could the group possibly consider rainwater collection through the use of a water butt.
- Judges look forward to the Little Bloomers' future plans, especially the litter picking station idea for the community. It was great to see a plan in place for future years.

## **Crossley Fields Junior and Infants**

**Silver**

### ***Overall Impression***

. A big thank you to Michael and students Daniel, Amora, Isack, Florence and Noor for greeting Jess and myself and taking the time to show us the good work they have already undertaken and their future plans, thank you.

Crossley Fields Junior and Infant School in Mirfield actively engages in several environmental projects and initiatives aimed at enhancing sustainability and environmental awareness among students along with their after-school Gardening Club. The students have created a small area with planters with a mixture of annuals and perennials and grasses with the emphasis on attracting pollinators with good colour and plant choice.

Hanging container tubs on the fence line down towards one of the main entrances creates a colourful pathway when parents and visitors arrive at the school, again with good plant choice for colour and variety, well done.

There is a large, grassed area that has been used to create a wooden seating and stage and is used by the school for events throughout the year along with various shrub beds to add diversity to this area.

The pond area is a unique place within the school which can be used for various environmental projects and is part of a wider plan in the years to come.

We appreciate the time and resources you have available, and the judges feedback reflects the ongoing plans you have for the coming years as mentioned by Michael on the tour.

### ***Judges feedback on areas for consideration***

- Is there a potential to paint or stain the large wooden fence that borders the pond area to preserve the fence, you could also add two or three small container tubs and plant with small trees like Acers, Magnolia's in front of the fence, they can bring height to the fence, bark and autumn colour whilst remaining relatively maintenance free.
- 2. A suggestion would be to remove the path and small rocks on the grassed area and relandscape level to avoid continued maintenance to the path. There is potential to add further trees to this area as well.
- 3. Plant bulbs along the fence line on Wellhouse Lane to bring colour all year round with Snow drops for winter, crocus, daffodils etc for spring.
- 4. Continue to explore floor containers you mentioned on the tour to the entrance off Wellhouse Lane for summer colour to possibly compliment the bulb planting for winter and Spring, bringing all year-round colour.
- 5. Remove the 4 small shrub areas on the large, grassed area with the Phormiums in to keep maintenance to a minimum and keep the remaining two beds to the side of the seating area, think about removing the large Phormiums in these and replant with smaller shrubs.
- 6. The pond area is a strong asset to the school and with funding and a volunteer, community clean up event posted through social media will help with environmental awareness.

## **Lord Deramore's Primary School**

**Gold**

### ***Overall Impression***

Thank you to Helen Smith for conducting the tour of Lord Deramore's extensive school garden. Her enthusiastic approach is paying dividends in all areas of the school grounds and the pupils are benefitting from the improvements that have been made as evidenced in the many before and after photos. The garden is sub divided into separate areas including a Reflection Garden, Raised Allotments for each year group, Lavender borders and the Welcome Plaza at the main entrance. The Forest School area allows the children to indulge in natural play and there is an "Outdoor Learning Week" held annually for all pupils. The school has won many awards for their green credentials and works with the nearby University of York on environmental projects such as the Hedgehog Friendly Scheme. Well done to everyone involved in creating this lovely and diverse space for the pupils to learn in the outdoor environment.

### ***Judges feedback on areas for consideration***

- In some areas of the formal gardens such as the Reflection Garden and the Car Park Divider consider planting in the borders under the hedges and gapping up where needed and when budgets allow. Could the older children be involved in researching which plants would be appropriate in terms of Right Plant, Right Place?
- Many of the shrubs in the formal areas still have their commercial labels on, perhaps for ease of identification. Could the children be involved in making their own hand painted labels, perhaps in an art class, which would replace the paper labels and add a touch of ownership to the plants?
- Continue with your plans to plant up the pedestrian passageway between the Wrap Around Care area and the forest/grassed area this winter.
- Continue with your plans to relocate and plant the white roses currently in pots. This will ease the necessity for watering and the plants will benefit from having their roots in soil.
- It would have been lovely to meet some of the children who use the school garden. Perhaps on a future visit the judges could meet some of the pupils and listen to their stories and experiences of learning in this fabulous space.

## **Malton School**

**Gold**

## ***Overall Impression***

Malton School is a comprehensive secondary school which has taken the innovative approach of offering all its pupils the opportunity to take part in an hour long personal development activity each week, with gardening being one of the subjects on offer. Over the course of the school year groups of 30 pupils from across the school have the opportunity to get involved in all aspects of gardening from growing plants from seeds and cuttings, to planting, planting design, maintenance and use of machinery and tools as relevant. The result has been the enhancement of the school grounds for the benefit of pupils, staff, the wider school community and other community groups who use the premises. Herbaceous borders, hanging baskets, a small kitchen garden, an orchard and a wellbeing garden are amongst the many features in the school grounds.

All garden areas are designed to support pollinators and wildlife, with insect hotels/boxes, bird boxes etc in many areas. Testament to their commitment to increasing biodiversity locally is a recent award from the Yorkshire Wildlife Trust.

Excellent recycling and re-using initiatives were in evidence including the creative use of old filing cabinets, benches from the PE changing rooms and so on.

They have developed good links with the other supporting organisations both national (RHS Campaign for School Gardening and the Woodland Trust) and locally with Helmsley Walled Garden. Financial support is by way of school funding supported further by sponsorship, fund raising and high levels of in-kind support from parents, staff and local businesses.

It was a pleasure to meet the pupils who are currently involved and to hear of their commitment to and enjoyment of the garden areas. It was also good to hear of the pupils' involvement in the ongoing planning and development of these areas.

This truly was an inspirational visit, demonstrating how the school environment can be transformed by adopting an approach which allows so many pupils to be involved, with the benefits being so much greater than just improving the surroundings. That this was in a secondary school makes it even more impressive and a model that could potentially be adopted by others.

A huge WELL DONE must go to the school leadership team, the gardening leadership team Mrs Wilson, Mr Rumney and all other staff involved in supporting the gardening, and most importantly, to the pupils who have been involved in the course of this and preceding years.

## ***Judges feedback on areas for consideration***

- Regarding the development of the old fruit orchard, the Northern Fruit Group may be able to assist with advice on renovation pruning and possibly even identification of the apple trees

- The potential establishment of Forest School activities would support development and usage of the Woodland Wildlife area
- Consider taking part in national wildlife surveys eg the Big Garden Birdwatch (RSPB), Big Butterfly Count (although this is at the end of the summer term)
- The recruitment of a new ground contractors should provide the opportunity to have positive support in the development and maintenance of the school grounds
- More water butts around the school will help with the logistics of watering when needed
- It would be good to perhaps include content on the development and usage of the school garden areas on the school website?

NB It has been noted that some of the above have already been identified by the school as part of their ongoing development plan.

## **Merlin Top Primary School**

## **Silver**

### ***Overall Impression***

. This school has a small, enclosed garden, with a small gardening group who make the most of the space they have. We were very pleased that they had entered Yorkshire in Bloom for the first time and have made a good start and hope that they continue to do so. We were shown round by the volunteer leader of the project and two Year 5 girls who were all very keen and enthusiastic.

They grow a variety of flowers, fruit, herbs and vegetables in the area. Everything was growing well and was well maintained. All flowers are grown from donated cuttings or seeds.

A bug hut, wildlife pond, bee nesting box and bird feeder all help to attract pollinators etc. and show the group's understanding of the importance of wildlife. They have done really well with little or no budget and even had to raise the funds to enter Yorkshire in Bloom!!

### ***Judges feedback on areas for consideration***

- Gardening should be an important part of the school activities.
- The benefits of outdoor activities and being involved with nature are well documented and help with all aspects of the children's education
- Try to get more support from the school and get more pupils involved. There are often many people and possibly parents who would be happy to help.

- It would be good to see some fund-raising activities to help the gardening group. All budgets are scarce and so any extra funds will be appreciated by this the gardening group.
- Is there any possibility of getting any more space in which to grow things?

## **Menston Primary School**

## **Silver Gilt**

### ***Overall Impression***

An enthusiastic and knowledgeable group of children and teaching staff are using the school grounds to learn, with multiple opportunities including pond dipping, propagation, planting and mini-beast habitats. Year round interest is provided by trees, bulbs, fruit, vegetables and wildflower planting. Two poly tunnels provide opportunities to learn - whatever the weather. The grounds provide an excellent range of habitats to support biodiversity. The school has been awarded the Learning Outside the Classroom Quality Mark Silver Award. There are excellent connections with the local community: Friends of Menston Primary School, Menston in Bloom, Menston Area Nature Trust, the Spindles Retirement Complex and local litter picking events. The school has received support from Virgin Media and saplings from the Woodland Trust.

Thanks to Mrs Meakin and the children for their tour of the grounds in very challenging weather. Well done!

### ***Judges feedback on areas for consideration***

- The plans to plant up the tyres and troughs near the welly wall with herbs will complement the existing planting.
- The new grounds maintenance contractors starting in September 2024 will hopefully support the school's environmental objectives.
- Consider installing water butts to help with watering across a large site.
- Sign up to the RHS Campaign for School Gardening to access additional resources.
- Consider further opportunities to connect artwork with the outdoors, perhaps signage and interpretation designed by the pupils could be incorporated into some areas. Woody, the bear decorated for the Leeds Bear Hunt, is a great example.

## **Molescroft Primary School**

## **Silver Gilt**

### ***Overall Impression***

Molescroft Primary School is all about caring and nurturing the children who attend this lovely school and also the nature and environment which surround the buildings. Every child in the school has the opportunity to learn in the outdoor areas and many lessons are linked to the garden areas. Each class had been given a half barrel to plant up and care for – the theme being The Olympics. The level of knowledge and enthusiasm from the students in each class was impressive including knowing plant names and the reasons behind their decision in choosing those particular plants. The children were articulate and enthusiastic.

There are a number of different areas making up the school garden including a pond, woodland and vegetable garden and the pupils were equally enthusiastic about all the elements of the grounds.

This is an excellent Yorkshire in Bloom entry and praise must go to, not only the children, but Head Teacher Mr Loncaster and his equally enthusiastic and caring staff.

### ***Judges feedback on areas for consideration***

. At this level of Yorkshire in Bloom it is very difficult to make suggestions for consideration and improvement

- Continue to work in partnership and have clear communication channels with external contractors to avoid catastrophes in planted areas.
- Continue to work with the local community in Molescroft and further afield.

With the retirement of Mr Loncaster at the end of the year, the existing teaching staff who have responsibility for outdoor learning could, perhaps begin to put together an action plan of work for when that “key element” is missing.

## **Category E2 – Universities, College & Further Education**

**University of Leeds**

**Gold and Category Winner**

***Overall Impression***



The university campus was a joy to visit with a well-planned judging route, which seemed to explore every corner.

The campus is maintained to a high standard, the carefully planned green areas some appearing natural and some formal forming a significant part of the overall landscape. The campus grounds together with off site areas such as at the North Hill Well Wood Project, are used as an integral part of the teaching and learning experience for the students.

The promotion of sustainability and biodiversity is not only taught but is put into practice on the campus. Peat free compost trials by students; wildlife habitats created and introduced with the Urban Buzz Project as part of a national campaign by Buglife, and even swift nest boxes installed on university buildings. For what is an inner city site the variety of flora and fauna was unexpected and is recognised as a result of the careful planning and actions of dedicated staff over many years.

### ***Judges feedback on areas for consideration***

- When redesigning the relaxing and seating area in the Western Campus, it may be an opportunity to incorporate as many recycled materials as is practical to support the universities sustainability ethos and raise student awareness of what is available and how it can be used.
- To further support the university's sustainability aims it is encouraged to consider the early development of a Water Capture Strategy for rainwater.
- Consideration could be given to including the provision of further bug hotels, bee post structures and interpretation signage at more of the wild flower meadow locations.

## **University of Bradford**

## **Silver Gilt**

### ***Overall Impression***

A thorough tour of the university highlighted how much space for landscaping has been incorporated into the campus. It was clear that green space is a valued asset to the campus and the constant planned refurbishment of planted borders and spaces a commitment for the future.

Consideration has been given to increasing wildlife with the provision of wild flower areas, most notably in the car park accessed from Shearbridge Road. Student involvement and interaction with the university grounds includes allotments, an apiary, herb planting, developing further the orchard area and a hedgehog survey.

The opportunity to increase floral displays to enhance a bland thoroughfare adjacent to the Pemberton Building has been taken with the installation of large stand alone planted

containers immeasurably improving the area. Overall a very sound entry that with a little adjustment will soon be reaching the next award level.

### ***Judges feedback on areas for consideration***

- Development of a Tree Trail around the campus would help inform students and visiting public alike. A possible project for an enlightened student?
- The newly planted areas would benefit from either a denser planting or the use of nursery plants to fill areas as the main plants develop and mature.
- The actions taken to increase sustainability and biodiversity were noteworthy, including the extensive use of bark mulch and additional no mow and wildflower areas. The introduction of a greater number of bug houses, bee hotels, bird boxes and bat boxes would compliment the progress made so far.

## **Category C7 – RHS It's Your Neighbourhood**

### **ACTION STATIONS - BINGLEY**

**LEVEL 3 - ADVANCING**

#### **Overall Impression**

#### ***Areas of achievement:***

. The herb planters at the front of the station were a feature.

The recycled planters near the station entrance were very colourful and obviously lovely when full of tulips.

It was good to meet such a committed group of volunteers who are clearly doing their best to make this Grade 2 Listed Station as attractive as possible

The sign language displays and book swaps in the waiting room were valuable and creative ideas.

The five rise lock celebration area is a very appropriate and creative idea and it must look lovely on Remembrance day with a river of red poppies.

It was good to see composting going on on site.

The thick layer of berrying shrubs at the back are a valuable roosting space.

***Judges feedback on areas for consideration***

- If blue planting is wanted for the lock area to suggest water then consider blue flax, Linium Perenne.
- Perhaps an information board for the lock area would be a good idea.
- Consider brightening up platform tubs with bright seasonal planting or consider planting herbs to bring in scent and insect alike, including butterflies.
- Consider brightening up the waiting room with potted plants on the windowsills.
- Consider with the council and the railway ways of brightening up the underpass.
- Consider approaching local businesses for sponsorship.
- Consider a meeting with representatives from both railway and council to work out a coordinated plan for improving this Grade 2 listed station

**ASPIN POND AND ADJACENT  
WILDFLOWER  
MEADOW**

**LEVEL 5 - OUTSTANDING**

**Overall Impression**

***Areas of achievement:***

pond and meadow rescued from obscurity.  
Research done into historical origins and age of pond.  
Protected habitat for Great Crested Newts.  
Active Facebook page "Friends of Aspin Pond"  
Annual botanical, bird and butterfly surveys.

***Judges feedback on areas for consideration***

- . Perhaps consideration could be given to:-
  - placing coloured identification charts of both pond and plant life so that visitors may be able to identify what species the pond and wildflower meadow sites contain.

- providing seating at the pond side where possible
- extend the annual survey to include night pollinators.

## **FIRTH PARK COMMUNITY ALLOTMENTS**

### **LEVEL 3 - ADVANCING**

#### **Overall Impression**

##### ***Areas of achievement:***

The group are making great progress since the site reopened after lockdown and have developed key areas within the site to maximise the sites potential. The group are continuing to work on plans to progress the site to allow children to use the site again in the future, including the development of a second adjoining allotment aimed at education including the assistance with home schooling to help address climate change issues such as how plants react to different weather scenarios like flooding or drought.

The group has a diverse volunteer group which is reflective of the local community, they are actively trying to encourage more volunteers by advertising in local shops and the post office.

There is clearly an obvious understanding of environmental responsibilities as this can be seen throughout the site. Where possible they are reducing the use of plastics by introducing paper plant pots and trying to remove any plastics they find on site whilst renovating the area. They have introduced freshwater invertebrates into their pond and have some bird boxes and a bug hotel. They continue to compost and recycle as much as possible and use any compost produced on the site.

The group are beginning to introduce a variety of different plants into the site, this is an ongoing project since the site reopened after lockdown. They are trying to overcome the difficulty of the site being on a slope by using raised planters to provide a level planting surface where applicable. They have plans to work with the council to try and introduce some gabions to create a tier planting area in the adjoining allotment from the main allotment.

#### ***Judges feedback on areas for consideration***

- The group need to continue to develop the current plots and provide access whilst continuing to develop the remaining site once labour and time become available. This development needs to be within the bounds of what can be continually maintained without over stretching the currently volunteers.

- Keep developing relationships with organisations who can assist the group with their continued development of the site.
- Continue to hold events to raise awareness of the project within the community to help increase volunteer numbers and then seek funding opportunities from all funding providers once volunteer numbers have increased.

## **FRIENDS OF CROW WOOD PARK**

## **LEVEL 4 - THRIVING**

### ***Overall Impression***

In the short hour we were able to spend with the Friends of Crow Wood Park it was impossible to take in the amount of events and community participation that takes place in this lovely park.

It was lovely to see the impressive memorial arch and gateway and to hear that the friends are currently in the process of obtaining quotes and raising funding to have these cleaned.

The pavilion which is run by the Friends of Crow Wood Park has an excellent display showing the history of the park and celebrating its centenary. We were amazed to hear the number of events which take place in the Park aimed at both building and supporting the local community. The Friends group also enhance the maintenance of the park by supporting corporate volunteering, local schools litter picking, a regular Friends working party. The well maintained bowling green is also used for also used for community Tai Chi sessions.

The group have deservedly been awarded Radio Leeds make a difference award and been nominated Calder Valley Community heroes.

### ***Judges feedback on areas for consideration***

- Keep up the good work, the levels of community inclusion are impressive.
- Most areas were maintained to a high standard but the shrub beds around the entrance from the car park to the tennis courts would benefit from some attention.
- Being aware of the reductions in local authority budgets it would be worth working with the gardeners to see how the volunteer groups and friends working party could further support their work.
- Move towards sustainable planting in containers to make maintenance easier for volunteers.

- The entry would be strengthened by providing information to demonstrate the criteria of In Bloom, possibly a photo display or album, which the group do well, to include additional information on areas not seen on judging day and to include future plans.
- Advise judges of upcoming works, that we appreciate that they cannot do it all but if they had mentioned that they were aware and had the work in hand to be done we could have accounted for this

## **FRIENDS OF DEAN ROAD CEMETERY**

## **LEVEL 5 - OUTSTANDING**

### ***Overall Impression***

The friends of group are 12 strong bolstered by another 30 plus for events etc. There are some very good information boards at the entrances to the site highlighting events which take place during the year most of which to proceeds go back into the site for future maintenance. I found it encouraging to see the cemetery trail which takes you to see not only head stones of past people of Scarborough but some fantastic stories about their past. The group also have ambitious plans of the old chapel at the centre of the cemetery involving the HLF, which may see it transformed into 2 air b&bs which would then generate income.

New notice boards for the 200 plus war graves as well as the trail available on the groups web site. The group have had the foresight several years ago to start planting specimen trees within the cemetery to replace fallen trees and or to compliment the species that is already present, one of which is an elm 100 plus years old and escaped dutch elm disease.

There are regular gardening sections during the year for anyone that wishes to join in and a couple of environmental guided talks. The group litter pick on a regular basis and the open space grass was very well kept. The group may consider in the future to formalise the cemetery into an arboretum carrying on the planting that's already started whilst attracting and ever more diverse user group which in turn may lead to more members of the group. There as some stunning annual flower beds within the main entrance giving the cemetery a respectful tone which are credited to North Yorkshire County Council.

### ***Judges feedback on areas for consideration***

- The group litter pick on a regular basis and the open space grass was very well kept. The group may consider in the future to formalise the cemetery into an arboretum carrying on the planting that's already started whilst attracting and ever more diverse user group which in turn may lead to more members of the group.

- There are some stunning annual flower beds within the main entrance giving the cemetery a respectful tone which are credited to North Yorkshire County Council. The garden is well managed and the group have a plan for the future and there are some major challenges ahead if this gem is to be sustainable long term.

## **FRIENDS OF SANDRINGHAM PARK**

**LEVEL 5 - OUTSTANDING**

### ***Overall Impression***

A lady called Kazia Knight leads this small, but dedicated team of volunteers. They have made this once very neglected area, and which they themselves admit was once blighted with antisocial behaviour, into a welcoming place for all the local community.

Volunteers work hard to ensure the park is clean of litter and graffiti. The park notice board proudly displays their Green Flag Award and along with their social media page informs all the community of upcoming events one of which is the annual 'Big Lunch'. They are extremely proud of this event, and hearing the work involved to create it, so they should be.

Hidden areas for wildlife with bird boxes, bug hotels, hedgehog houses are found if you delve onto the footpaths off the beaten track. Floral areas are placed at both entrances in containers near the notice board and small beds which will create year round interest.

Local residents have improved an area just outside the park to compliment the work the 'Friends' group has undertaken.

On seeing the plans for the new play area and hearing of other plans for wildflowers etc, the future is looking very bright indeed for this small but well-loved greenspace.

Well done everyone!

### ***Judges feedback on areas for consideration***

- Consider sourcing a new container for the entrance underneath the noticeboard. Something which will withstand the test of time.

## **GLEADLESS VALLEY COMMUNITY CHURCH**

**LEVEL 4 - THRIVING**

### ***Overall Impression***

The multitude of raised beds on site giving opportunity to the local community to come & pick fresh produce & herbs along with the donation of produce to the local food bank in the heart of Gleadless Valley is a great initiative !The layout of the raised beds in relation to the given space & topography of this small site is well thought through. The garden is extensively organically managed with the production of compost from green waste, rain water harvesting & a no pesticide approach. The small core of dedicated volunteers are enthusiastic & committed to the continued success of the venture & are obviously knowledgeable in organic gardening.

### ***Judges feedback on areas for consideration***

- The raised bed to the front of the church building in which the cross is situated could benefit from renewal, this being the centrepiece of the site replanting in the form of perennials & dwarf shrubs along with new sleepers would make an immediate impact.
- The wildflower meadow/area has had limited success with the introduction of wildflower plugs, wholesale clearance of an area(s) with the introduction of low nutrient top soil would ensure better results.
- The wider Gleadless Valley Area is currently in the midst of a regeneration programme, it is vitally important the future use of the building is included within discussions to ensure the viability of the project going forward.

## **GROW SCARBOROUGH**

## **LEVEL 3 - ADVANCING**

### ***Overall Impression***

This community garden has one person who has the drive, ambition and leadership skills to galvanise the community into action and now has more than a dozen volunteers that help regularly .

Yes a small space but well designed some 7 years ago and left unused until Darren came along and volunteered to revitalise it for the community. Darren has applied for several small grants and is in the process of applying for a larger grant with members of the group working towards an environmental qualification. The site is at the moment in transition from being an overgrown wilderness into a well managed community resource.

However the site does benefit from some existing features, 2 Beehives full stocked with colonies of bees, raised beds for easy access useful for people with mixed abilities, a small orchard which the group has plans to expand, compost area wild flower area to banking, bird boxes, new glass house and future plans for a small wildlife pond, mosaic on the back elevation of the building with community input.

### ***Judges feedback on areas for consideration***



- The garden is well managed and the group have a plan for the future and there is some major challenges ahead if this gem is to be sustainable long term. The main challenge being the raised beds and retaining wall ,which as with all new build office blocks garden may have been a nice to have and was done with cost in mind. All the wooden sleepers are at the end of their useful life and as such need replacing within the next 1-2 years this could be done in stages however it would cost tens of thousands of pounds.

## **HEELEY CITY FARM**

## **LEVEL 5 - OUTSTANDING**

### ***Overall Impression***

After a tough year of change & a reduction in funding it was good to see this has not translated into a decline of both the site & the offering to the local community & the various groups the farm supports. This in itself is a credit to the current management who have identified areas for improvement & are doing their utmost to attract & secure funding to maintain this inner city attraction.

The proposed link up with the local primary schools will further enhance the farm's reputation & provide the foundation for more curriculum based education being carried out on site.

The new meeting space is again a great example of foresight in firstly identifying the lack of such an area within the site & secondly the scope it has to offer for a multitude of activities & functions, the use of sustainable materials in the build & thoughts around accessibility also deserve a mention.

Composting, rainwater harvesting, a proposed hydroponic growing pond & green roofs are all great examples of the sustainable nature of the farm.

The Vegetable/Kitchen Garden was thriving at the time of judging with a multitude of organically grown produce on show , the adjacent raised beds with accessibility enhancements were a great idea to supplement traditional growing areas.

### ***Judges feedback on areas for consideration***

- Continue with the holistic plan to link different areas of the farm through a path network, this can be aided by strategic signage & interpretation to give visitors the full experience of what the farm has to offer.
- Planting throughout the farm is appropriate to the surroundings, a little more maintenance on beds around high footfall areas such as the main entrance to the farm would give immediate visual results.

- Prioritising the garden centre in terms of selling easy to propagate plants could provide a valuable income stream, focus on providing easy to grow sustainable plants with added beneficial traits- bee/butterfly friendly/pollinators etc.
- The donation of the Tatton Park show Garden will be a great addition to the farm, interpretation in the form of a lectern would be a great addition providing visitors of its origin & purpose.

## **HIGH GREEN IN BLOOM**

## **LEVEL 5 - OUTSTANDING**

### ***Overall Impression***

This lovely quiet village has been enhanced by the work of the High Green in Bloom team who work to maintain 20 planters around the village centre and are actively improving small unloved verges on the outskirts of the village.

Verges at Thompson Hill and at the Old Vets corner have enhanced these areas and the Christmas tree verge provides an attractive focal point for community events. The living Christmas tree is growing so well that it will require some ingenuity to get the star in the top in future years.

The original wooden planters are gradually being refurbished and replaced. The maintenance of the planters is supported by the local businesses and residents who keep them watered.

### ***Judges feedback on areas for consideration***

- Continue with the programme of refurbishing and replacing the older planters.
- Pay attention to the ground around the base of the planters.
- Continue to encourage sponsorship and involvement from local businesses and residents.

## **HMP LEEDS**

## **LEVEL 5 - OUTSTANDING**

### ***Overall Impression***

The Q Branch at HMP Leeds amongst their many duties have renovated an area of wasteland into a multipurpose area, providing aviaries for various raptors, hedgehog rescue area and a growing space for fruit and vegetables. All this is within the site boundaries of a 177-year-old urban prison with some areas that are Grade II\* listed. Q Branch is also complimented by chickens not only providing eggs to sell but also useful manure to help feed the beds in the poly tunnels. The beehives are also very productive with a waiting list already for this season's harvest.

Planning is key to this busy team and regular meetings are held on site organising projects and considering the suggestions from the Jobs Box. The wide range of raptors provides the opportunity for the team to gain further skills and responsibilities, monitoring and maintaining the birds along with a small group of ferrets and the hedgehog rescue.

The fruit and vegetables produced on site are either given to the local food bank or sold to staff and hanging baskets are created, cared for and sold giving the team skills and experience in growing and maintenance. There are working links with the local community working with the RSPCA, hedgehog rescue & recovery, the Food Bank and liaising with other prisons.

Raised planters have been created in the poly tunnels to give a wider variety of people an opportunity to get involved. The site has been transformed with flower troughs and displays around the entire site creating a colourful outlook for everyone to enjoy, including the Owl and Union Flag beds. There are also wildflower areas creating areas for insect pollinators and a large landscaped pond, full of fish.

The site has also been enhanced by several large murals which help to change the atmosphere of an austere setting. The 2 tractors have also been decorated. There are many instances of recycling within the site including the kitchen facilities for the pizza oven, flower troughs around the site along with good composting facilities.

Q Branch creates many opportunities for new experiences and increasing skills but also a relaxing area for the team and staff to enjoy. There are clear outcomes from the range of work increasing the confidence of the members of the gardens team.

In summary much has been achieved within the limited space and resources by the team involved. A very impressive tour which bodes well for prisoners and staff involved. Thank you to the team.

### ***Judges feedback on areas for consideration***

- Perhaps extend the herb planting into other containers with some labelling so people can use the herbs.
- There are still a few grassed areas that could be converted into growing spaces to help expand productivity.
- It will be interesting to see the relandscaping of the slope with heathers perhaps some dwarf conifers could be incorporated maybe some prostrate junipers or Pinus mugo (Dwarf mountain pine) just to give a different form and colour on the

banking.

- The plans to create a new area in the GOOP area will provide further opportunities.

## **HORTON IN RIBBLEDALE RAILWAY STATION**

## **LEVEL 3 - ADVANCING**

### **Overall Impression**

#### ***Areas of achievement:***

Areas of achievement:

The Horton in Ribblesdale team are a relatively new group. The team is small, Phil and Ann, however, it is clear to see the work they have already undertaken and the constraints they are working with, not least the environment. There is currently a major reconstruction ongoing of the line for the quarry but the team are working well to overcome this.

There is also ongoing work in the grade 2 listed station building, developing a café which is now open at the weekends and soon a holiday let. Friends of the Settle and Carlisle Line, FoSCL, volunteers work at the station and in the café. There have been some volunteers from the village helping in the café as well.

The bed being cultivated to the standard of when the late Dave Moss created it is a lovely way of bringing in the history of this lovely station. The protection and maintenance of the heritage buildings and station furniture is very clear.

The embankment is a lovely wildlife area. It was clear to see at some point in the past it was planted with perennials, some now thriving in the border by the wall.

They have water collection points, a greenhouse and composting area. There are future plans for raised beds to grow vegetables for use in the café.

The location of this station brings about various challenges, especially the weather. Not everything survives at this level and can be late in making an appearance! There are also the restrictions of working at a live railway line.

This is a work in progress, but a very good start has been made.

#### ***Judges feedback on areas for consideration***

- Consider approaching the quarry for some sponsorship.
- Allow the embankment to develop as a wildlife area. It may be worth contacting the Yorkshire Wildlife Trust for advice.
- Consider mirroring the two beds below the wildlife area with similar plants.

- Consider working with Karl at Settle Station re increasing plant knowledge and maintenance. Though your constraints re weather and throughput/footfall are different to those of Settle Station

## **INCREDIBLE EDIBLE NORTHALLERTON**

## **LEVEL 5 - OUTSTANDING**

### **Overall Impression**

#### ***Areas of achievement:***

. Using Facebook, other social media and email lists to spread awareness of the garden is a good idea. As is giving talks to schools and other organisations.

It was good to hear that plenty of support is coming from other community groups and organisations in Northallerton.

Using recycled wood and disguardred tyres for the beds was a good idea.

It was good to hear that young children are very much involved with the garden. The drawing competition was a lovely idea.

Using the wall to support espaliers was a good idea. The mural added a lot of life and interest to the garden.

Obviously the garden is really going to benefit the local community.

The Cherry Croft garden really makes a difference to what could have been a forgotten space.

### ***Judges feedback on areas for consideration***

- It might be a good idea to add other espaliers to those already on the wall on site.
- Perhaps it would be possible to add more beds to the garden.
- Perhaps local businesses might donate plants and materials.
- Consider letting the young children already visiting the site to have their own raised bed where they can grow quick developing salad plants like radishes and enjoy eating them.
- Consider trying raised beds about a yard square and allowing local families to adopt one so they can grow and eat some of their own vegetables and salads.

- Perhaps some of the allotment holders would donate plants to grow on in the garden.

## **KEEP HECKY TIDY**

## **LEVEL 4 - THRIVING**

### ***Overall Impression***

. There has been much achieved from a litterpicking group to revitalising a visual space in a short space of time. Not only is there a welcoming area but the group have considered the environment and erected a bird feeding station, bug hotel, bird boxes and compost bins. The group have managed to create an engaging area for all, despite the lack of water on site. Fruit and herbs are planted for passers-by to pick. The refurbishment of the railing around the open space have made a real difference to the site.

There are good links with various groups in the community such as the Scouts, the Local Authority and local MP providing much needed support. The regular meetings bringing the community together are a real benefit.

There is excellent publicity through Facebook and the phone boxes reaches out to a wide community spreading the word of the work carried out.

The group have started to expand into other areas and are making a difference in Heckmondwike and there are plans for further artwork on the site.

### ***Judges feedback on areas for consideration***

- If possible, add some rotted manure or bark to the beds to give them a feed, this may be done in stages depending on funding/resources available.
- Maybe consider the type of area some of the plants might prefer as there are some plants for shade in full sun and some plants that would prefer sunshine that are in the shaded areas. Is there may be further opportunity to try more plants for pollinators within the site [www.rhs.org.uk/science/pdf/conservation-and-biodiversity/wildlife/plants-for-pollinators-garden-plants.pdf](http://www.rhs.org.uk/science/pdf/conservation-and-biodiversity/wildlife/plants-for-pollinators-garden-plants.pdf)
- Would there be a possibility of putting up a sign or noticeboard to name the area but also publicise the work parties and also request volunteers? Maybe show old photos of the site and ask for any stories of the site in the past.
- Consider applying to Awards4All for future funding for signage or artwork etc [www.tnlcommunityfund.org.uk/funding/programmes/national-lottery-awards-for-all-england](http://www.tnlcommunityfund.org.uk/funding/programmes/national-lottery-awards-for-all-england)

## MIRFIELD HERITAGE SITE

LEVEL 5 - OUTSTANDING

### *Overall Impression*

It is clear that the small group of volunteers at the Heritage site are hard-working and dedicated, with year-round work taking place to ensure the site is clean, clear and accessible for visitors.

The group have created pathways with grass cutting and have consolidated existing paths, and autumn debris is raked away. Wildlife has been greatly considered at the site – bat, bird and an owl box are present, and birds and butterflies enjoyed the wilder areas. The wildlife information board is a great addition.

Looking at the judges considerations from last year, the group have been working on clearing the bracken from the motte. While this is not a quick and easy job, and is extremely challenging, the work the group has done so far is excellent. It was fantastic to see a computer-generated image of what the site would have looked like, along with information about the mound.

The work in the memorial garden, especially the flower beds, was excellent. Site appropriate flowers were chosen which gives a lovely pop of colour to the garden. Graves of interest here were explained with great enthusiasm and pride, and it was good to see old photos of the site. The 'Graveyard Gang' and all who give their time to this site should be very proud of their achievements. There is a fantastic natural blend of public areas and wild areas to encourage both the community and nature to share the space in harmony. Well done, everyone.

### *Judges feedback on areas for consideration*

- It was great to hear that the team will be working with local children to form a nature trail. This will be a fantastic addition to the site. It would be great to also have a heritage trail to showcase the graves of interest and landmarks on site if this isn't already in place as part of the Churchyard Trail.
- Keep up the excellent work on the motte. Though this can be challenging due to the height and steepness of the mound, your work is paying off fantastically.
- Judges recommend that the group now consider stepping up into the Yorkshire in Bloom Parks and Open Spaces category to aim higher and further showcase their fantastic achievements.

## NORTHALLERTON SECRET GARDEN

LEVEL 5 -  
OUTSTANDING

## ***Overall Impression***

The Secret Garden is indeed Northallerton's hidden gem just behind the busy high street. The shape of the garden means that there are surprises hidden around every turn. The number of plants in a small space is amazing. Everywhere the plants were healthy and impressively pest free, since this is an organic garden. The use of chemicals is avoided and the garden is reliant on natural pest control.

Very different areas are being combined along the links of the garden to produce different experiences as visitors move through it from the growing area to the campfire area and it's very impressive.

All through the garden, there was provision of different sorts for children and that was very pleasing to see. It would've been nice to spend some time in one or to use the inviting seating areas on site.

It was very impressive to hear of the number of activities for children and schools in the garden and also to see the provision for children in the garden itself, including a play, kitchen and natural musical instruments and of course the camp fire area for groups and schools to enjoy also.

Nature and wildlife is encouraged and cherished in the garden and the blackboard containing lists of species found on site is an excellent idea and will benefit all visitors to the site especially schools and children.

It's good to know the garden keeps involved with the local community in many ways. This can only benefit the garden on an ongoing basis.

## ***Judges feedback on areas for consideration***

- For a first time visitor the garden is not easy to find. It would be a good idea to have more signage that is easily spotted both on the High Street and outside the actual garden gate.
- The wildflower site near the campfire area is obviously a difficult place to plant. Since it's shady, forget-me-nots should do there. Maybe bergenias would work in places. It might be worth trying some heucheras or perhaps perennial geraniums would be suitable. Of course vinca minor would soon cover it.
- Otherwise, if planting is still difficult consider creating a pattern from shapes filled with natural materials such as chalk or limestone, crushed brick, sand, pebbles, broken terracotta. There are many things which would create a lovely pattern and fit in with the natural nature of the site.



## RESIDENTS OF CUDWORTH GROUP

## LEVEL 2 - IMPROVING

### *Overall Impression*

The main achievement is in making a start and forming a group with the purpose of working to improve the environment of Cudworth.

The St John's garden area is appropriately landscaped for the area with the small stone head sculptures being incorporated to give a sense of place.

Clearing and planting overgrown beds has been a big task and now they are planted provides a sense of achievement and establishes community recognition.

### *Judges feedback on areas for consideration*

- When possible try to increase the size and skills of the group.
- In terms of planting it would be better to concentrate on the existing beds rather than increase the work load. Again when possible increase the density of planting as this would provide greater impact.
- Other groups have used a tear drop flag when carrying out work to promote the group so some form of advertising may increase knowledge of the group.

## RIPON WORKHOUSE MUSEUM

## LEVEL 5 - OUTSTANDING

### *Overall Impression*

. The Workhouse Museum is a lovely place to visit on a lovely summer day and a place full of great interest.

It was lovely to hear about all the organisations which have been of help and also that so many volunteers enjoy working in this lovely place.

It was very impressive to hear of all the good work that has been done in the community, often working with other organisations, especially those bringing interest and enjoyment to young people.

It was fascinating to hear of the detailed accounts kept in Victorian times of garden produce and to see the ledger where this tradition is being continued today. Working with Ripon Walled garden to produce apple juice to sell on site is a good idea.

It is impressive that plants appropriate to the period have been researched and obtained and that they are largely being grown in the Victorian way. The use of companion planting to deter pests and avoid the use of chemicals is impressive.

The efforts to investigate and record the range of wildlife on site are impressive. The information boards around site were well and thoughtfully planned and are a really valuable addition to the garden.

The museum are doing a valuable job in working with GP and social referrals.

### ***Judges feedback on areas for consideration***

- Perhaps it would be nice to use a chalkboard to record the latest wildlife sightings around the museum.
- Perhaps it might be an idea to place an information board in the Master and Matron's Garden giving a brief account of the site.
- There are interesting plants in this garden, perhaps add plant labels so people know what they are.
- The Greenhouse is important to the site, it might be an idea to use planters to enhance the area around it.
- Consider pamphlets that could be given to visitors, or which they could buy giving details of the garden plants.
- It is possible that the site might be appropriate to points in the National Curriculum for schools. It might be interesting to look into this.

## **ROBERTS STREET COMMUNITY ALLOTMENT**

**LEVEL 4 - THRIVING**

### **Overall Impression**

#### ***Areas of achievement:***

. Other unexpected commitments meant I visited with input by notes of activities provided by Peter and Steph which were very helpful.

Three more volunteers now support the project, Jolly Youth group have worked on the site with more work visits planned, a community art project Llay Bees provided a free community art project extending the use of the site. The crops on site looked to be growing well.

### ***Judges feedback on areas for consideration***

- Continue to develop when possible links to other community groups who can use and promote the allotment often for alternative uses.
- 
- When possible support other community gardens and the residents group.

## **ROYSTON GREENSPACES GROUP**

## **LEVEL 5 - OUTSTANDING**

### ***Overall Impression***

The group is made up of some 25 volunteers some of which adopt planters around the village and area given £20 per floral feature to plants etc per year. The wells in the centre of the village is very well maintained flanked with a mixed raised border to the rear and some well maintained planters and hanging baskets. The strength of the group is the vast evidence of community involvement with in the area and the involvement of the many youth groups in encouraging as it aid sustainability to the project.

### ***Judges feedback on areas for consideration***

- The group may wish to consider adding a colour scheme to the village planting to be in keeping with the village identity.
- Carryon working to get the damaged railings repaired around the village.
- Tony's area at the bottom of the park was very good and full of colour and the group may like to consider creating (with council Permission ) a wild flower maze in the bottom corner of the vast open space grass.

## **SETTLE RAILWAY STATION**

## **LEVEL 4 - THRIVING**

### ***Overall Impression***

Settle Station is a busy freight and commuter line. Settle station is part of Friends of Settle and Carlisle Line, FoSCL who have volunteers working along the Settle/Carlisle line.

We were met by Larry, Karl and Dave. Their knowledge of the station and the work involved to bring it to this delightful standard are to be commended. The heritage of this station is clearly valued and conserved.

Karl is the volunteer gardener. It is impressive to see the high standard of work that has gone into the beds along both sides of the station. The hanging baskets and tubs are provided by ISS a contractor for Network Rail. Karl has a great working relationship with the Station Master and staff.

There has been a good community involvement with this station. The Cubs have planted a herb barrel. Dementia Forward have planted an old wooden luggage trolley and the local Girl Guides have built an excellent bug house. There are water butts on buildings for water collection. A small pond and birdfeeder in one of the beds to encourage wildlife.

There is a wide range of plants, the variety of roses and the sensory plants behind the seats are excellent.

### ***Judges feedback on areas for consideration***

- We discussed the possibility of sourcing a composting site – not on railway property.
- The bridge across the railway lines requires some maintenance – however we fully appreciate this is out of your control and the responsibility of Network Rail.
- Would it be possible for you to work with ISS re the plants they use for the barrels and hanging baskets?
- It was lovely to see that a few of the plants had small labels – perhaps consider extending this to some of the other less identifiable plants.

## **SHADWELL IN BLOOM**

## **LEVEL 5 - OUTSTANDING**

### ***Overall Impression***

. This village was looking lovely with many very attractive flower beds, barrier planters and hanging baskets containing a good variety of annual and sustainable plants.

Everywhere was very clean and tidy with good gardening practice and examples of good concerns of the environment. The school is very good with an active gardening club and all of the pupils involved with gardening. It was lovely to meet the gardening group who were knowledgeable and very enthusiastic. The poster competition, the “grow and cook” for each class, and the flower bed at the front of the school are to be commended.

Throughout the village there are examples of good practice eg the Bee Border, Incredible Edibles, the herb beds for community use, the wildflower bed., selective mowing, allotments with their new composting boxes and “The Little Veg Library”

The various methods of communication are very good and used appropriately. Shadwell in Bloom work with and support the community and many of the groups in the village.

They are very well organised in all aspects of their activities with a good sponsorship scheme and help with watering etc as required, which is much appreciated. .

### ***Judges feedback on areas for consideration***

- This is an entry of the highest standard and would do well in the main competition. They do however feel that it would put this very hard working group under too much pressure and feel IYN is best for them.
- The School is also of a very high standard and would do well in the Harrogate Flower Show Young People's Award.
- Information and communication and both good but perhaps some information boards might add to your entry

## **SHIPLEY IN BLOOM**

## **LEVEL 5 - OUTSTANDING**

### ***Overall Impression***

. It was lovely to visit an active and committed group like Shipley in Bloom who are obviously making such a difference to their local community.

It was very pleasing to see what a lot of support the group deservedly get from the people and businesses of Shipley.

It was good to see the efforts that the group makes to be involved with other groups in the community and to be part of their events.

The principals that the group works by are very impressive, clearly the group has the good of the environment as their guiding principal.

The Memorial Bed outside the Asda store is lovely, creative and well cared for. Clearly it is a great credit to the gentleman who tends it and to Asda who support the effort.

An impressive difference has been made to the Baptist Church garden in a short time. It now provides a lovely green haven for both wildlife and people in the district, which is important as not everyone in the district has a garden. It was good to hear of the involvement of the Young Church and to see so much effort to provide for wildlife, including a nice bug hotel.

Obviously the extensive use of social media to advertise events and celebrate achievements will benefit the group.

Planters around the Police Station were in very good condition and very creative with a colour scheme to match the police cars and use of police boots as planters.

The planters outside businesses in Westgate have transformed the street into a lovely place to sit.

### ***Judges feedback on areas for consideration***

- Would it be possible to offer help to local schools? obviously they will be busy but hopefully a way could be found to give pupils a chance to plant, even if they can only manage a couple of planters. It would be very worthwhile.
- Would it be possible to produce A5 versions of the group name and logo that businesses might be able to display to show their support?
- Perhaps a way might be found to get help in repainting the mural at the back of the church garden.
- Developing the new area behind the church garden is a good idea and a stumpery would be good in the very shady area.
- If it was possible to record wildlife already present among the brambles and nettles that might be useful when planning new planting.

## **ST MARY'S NEIGHBOURHOOD**

## **LEVEL 5 - OUTSTANDING**

### **Overall Impression**

#### ***Areas of achievement:***

The Old Colonial was a fantastic stop on the judges' travels. This pub certainly has the wow factor, with bright pops of colour in every corner from blooming flowers. The war memorial rock garden, planted up by Tim, is something you don't see every day at a pub, but works well to enhance the entrance and small patio area as well as providing a place for reflection and remembrance. The multitude of plant pots and quirky features, including the outdoor shelter, make The Old Colonial's entrance a feature in itself. It is clear that Carol has worked tirelessly on this site, and she should be very proud of the work achieved.

Pinfold is another area of achievement highlighted to the judges. The plain grassed area was transformed into a peaceful spot with neatly edged borders and low maintenance beds. The perennials selected for the small beds work well in this area, especially the lavender and salvia, and the bench and trees placed in the centre provide the perfect place to sit and relax amongst the bees and the butterflies attracted to the plants. Well done to all involved at this location.

The Vicarage Meadow area with hedgehog 'palaces' and part of a highway was excellent to look at, especially when shown how far the highway covers.

Mirfield Community Centre and all around this building that the group have taken on are brimming with flowers and look stunning. It was great to hear how community payback gets involved with the car park and other areas. The watering system for the window

planters were great to see, and the planted borders around the centre looked fantastic, with a good selection of plants fit for the area. Well done to the team involved here.

Finally, it was lovely to meet Malcolm at the polytunnel area. Vegetables inside and out, grown for the community, were thriving, and the multiple compost heaps with clear markers was good to see.

The group should be very proud of their achievements across all sites they work on. It was a pleasure to visit, and judges look forward to seeing the group's future plans come to fruition.

***Judges feedback on areas for consideration***

- The Vicarage Meadows area was lovely to view. In the long border that sits in the shade, consider more shade-hardy perennials to fill the spaces.
- Water recycling could be considered at The Old Colonial and other areas currently without water butts to collect rainwater for some plants at the sites.

**STARBECK GREENWAY COMMUNITY PROJECT**

**LEVEL 1 - ESTABLISHING**

***Overall Impression***

The Greenway Community Project only started in March 2024. This is a very new group who are enthusiastic about enhancing the area by working with nature and wildlife.

The group have welcomed support and advice that has been given by Sherelee from the local authority. Together they are working to naturally improve this area without impacting on an environment that is awash with wildlife.

The group started by clearing the entrance to the Greenway, making it safer. They have cut back a huge amount of undergrowth that has seen the beck become more visible. The result is more accessible for walkers, families and cyclists using the Greenway.

Sustran volunteers have supported work in this area. There are plans to DNA test the pond.

This is a long term project, it was clear to see there is a willingness and passion to undertake this work.

***Judges feedback on areas for consideration***

- We discussed creating a document to identify plants and trees on a seasonal basis. Once you have completed this you will be in a far better position to know how to further progress and create a plan for the coming years.
- There was a suggestion of identifying the trees and placing them onto a database.
- It may be worth recording the wildlife in the area. In the long term, you may wish to create information sheets or a board at the entrances advising what may be seen in the area.
- Whilst signage is not always welcome, a reminder about litter and dog fouling may be worth considering. On our visit the area was clear and clean.
- We discussed the possibility of seats – again this is long term and perhaps using fallen trees to create a seating would blend in with the lovely natural surroundings.

## **STARBECK LIBRARY GARDEN**

## **LEVEL 4 - THRIVING**

### ***Overall Impression***

. The Starbeck Library Garden is a quiet space at the side of the Community Library. The plants have all been donated by the community and used effectively in the garden. Simon showed us around and explained the scheme in place. It was clear to see the dedication and pride that there is with this garden. The borders have been cut to give a lovely flow through this space. Collected leaves from the trees are used as mulch around the borders. A donated raised bed has been planted by library staff with annuals. It was good to see that there were compost bins in a corner. This quiet and peaceful space that looks onto Belmont Field and is a credit to the community who donated plants and those who have created this lovely garden.

### ***Judges feedback on areas for consideration***

- . Consider adding some sensory plants such as English lavenders or rosemary.
- Going forward it may be that you have to be a little selective with the donations from the community.
- Consider bird/bat boxes.

## **STONEFALL AND PANHANDLE PARKS**

## **LEVEL 5 - OUTSTANDING**



## **Overall Impression**

There are approximately 8 regular members of this group. However, they have a list of 80+ with whom they communicate. The group are well organised and have well developed plans. They work in partnership with the local authority and have an excellent relationship with them.

The sites are challenging in that they are on a former brickworks and clay quarry with the Leeds to Thirsk railway line, which closed in the 1950's, close by. Some of the land is privately owned, they now have a working relationship with the current owners, Taylors.

The information board, built with the help of the Yorkshire Guild of Drystone Wallers incorporates original Stonefell Bricks, was produced after researching the history of the area. It sits well in the entrance and is informative to all visitors to the park.

The overall impact of the parks is remarkable in a very subtle way. Working with nature is the key focus. The wildflower meadow is well managed, walking through it is a real pleasure. It cannot be underestimated the work involved to create such a thriving area.

Over the years the team have overcome numerous challenges. They have a comprehensive list of bird, plants and tree species. The 'See if you can find...' sheet for everyone is informative and fun for young people.

### ***Judges feedback on areas for consideration***

- Is it worth considering introducing bee hives?
- We didn't see bird/bat boxes – though there may be some?

## **THE CUTTINGS GARDENING CLUB**

## **LEVEL 4 - THRIVING**

### ***Overall Impression***

Areas of achievement:

The Cuttings Gardening Club is located in the Harrogate Neighbours Housing Association in Starbeck. The name derives from the land in which the complex has been built. The old railway sidings. It was impressive to see how much work and care has been put into creating this peaceful space. The Cuttings Gardening Club currently consists of 6 residents who work with Caroline, the gardener. This garden has only been established in the last couple of years and it is a credit to Caroline and all the members that it is at such a good level in such a short space of time.

The space has been divided up between; warm welcoming borders, bee hives, greenhouses, vegetable and fruit growing areas. The produce is used in the complexes kitchen. There is also a wildflower meadow with fruit trees and a number of lawned seating areas. At the end of the garden there are chickens – the eggs can be purchased from reception.

Residents are consulted on the types of plants they would like to see outside of their properties and in the garden.

The Gardening Club members grow the majority of plants from seeds and cuttings. Sue, the CEO, is a trained bee keeper and looks after this area.

Harlow Carr has helped and there had been a group activity with local school children. It was good to hear about the number of recycled and donated items such as greenhouses, raised beds, plants and planters.

The team described and showed pictures of the various wildlife that visit the garden – roe deer, foxes and squirrels to name some. Plus the frogs in the pond and the birds which visit.

Thank you to Jamie for stepping in and taking us around, to Michael, the garden historian, for his input and all the residents who we saw and spoke to on the day.

### **Judges feedback on areas for consideration**

- Some of the lawned area had become patchy especially by the borders. However, there are plans to remove the grass and extend the border for residents in wheelchairs.
- There are plans for a polytunnel to go at the end of the garden which will greatly improve this area.
- We understand that you hope to develop links with local schools, Starbeck in Bloom and Harlow Carr.

## **THE TRIBE ECO CLUB**

## **LEVEL 4 - THRIVING**

### **Overall Impression**

#### ***Areas of achievement:***

A big thank you to Jean for showing us around, especially considering the challenges that were faced when she came into the garden that morning. The garden is a joyous mix of styles and areas that reflect the interests and ambitions of the young group members. The tyre Caterpillar with its googly eyes and body made of individual gardens is innovative and striking providing a focal point in the garden.

A lot of effort has clearly been put in to encourage local businesses, the Police, etc. to engage with the Eco Group. There are a range of doners, commendations and positive reflections were visible in displays and around the garden which demonstrated the

community support for the Group. All aspects of gardening are being considered and addressed including composting, recycling, plant placement, planting in difficult areas.

The growing of herbs and vegetables which are then used by the cooking club must be commended as it illustrates the whole food cycle.

### ***Judges feedback on areas for consideration***

Areas that the Group could consider include:

- Thinning of the branches of the trees on the boundary: this would allow more light to permeate through to the areas below enabling a greater range of plants to thrive underneath whilst maintaining the shade and structure that they currently provide
- Review of the grassy areas: whilst the grass provides background and animal habitat it is worth considering whether to keep all the areas or focus on fewer and look at other floor textures such as bark to provide ground cover (and bug habitat) whilst offering a different environment to work in.
- If funding could be sought consider removing the tall birch tree that is competing with the larger willow. The stump could be utilised for a planter or base for a play/activity table.
- Consider introducing a Tallest Sunflower competition in the least shaded part of the site as a fun activity.
- Consider how better to identify the wildflower border as a planted area to prevent further accidental mowing for example Plant Pot People 'guards'
- Narrow area between entrance ramp and main building; consider options on how to best utilise this area, potentially with planters hung on the ramp side wall (between the side wall and the building and used for growing soft fruits e.g strawberries and/or vegetables

## **THORNES MILLENNIUM GREEN TRUST**

**LEVEL 5 -  
OUTSTANDING**

### **Overall Impression**

#### ***Areas of achievement:***

On walking on to the site through the metal arches and under the shaded mature trees a welcome greeting by the handful of volunteers who maintain this small corner park area to an outstanding level.

The leaves are gathered along with the grass cuttings and any other green waste and added to the compost pile in the corner. A small rockery is also nestled away in the opposite corner with a pathway made by the hedgehog on his adventures from the hedgehog shelter hiding under a shrub. B

ird boxes and a bug house are also nestled amongst the selection of plants. Community support from the coffee mornings, bonus ball scheme and leaflets and the notice board as helped keep this area going for the past 25years and hopefully for many years to come.

### **Judges feedback on areas for consideration**

#### ***Areas for Development:***

- Introduce more pollinating sustainable planting that suits the conditions of the site.
- Stay away from seasonal bedding and encourage the wildflower area.
- Consider changing from its your neighbourhood category to the parks, public gardens and cemeteries assessment.

## **WOMBWELL PARK**

## **LEVEL 4 - THRIVING**

### ***Overall Impression***

Wombwell Park is a valuable community asset. It is a large park area ,used by children, dog walkers and families. The park also provides a play area,skate park,multi games area,fitness station and a community pavilion.

Several events are held throughout the year including Picnic in the park,Halloween, Easter events and litter picks. All events are well attended by the local community. Their biggest event is picnic in the park a funfair, donkeys and entertainers. There are an estimated 1000 visitors to this event and generates significant income.

The volunteers are very hard working and enthusiastic, providing many events involving the local community.

### ***Judges feedback on areas for consideration***

- More attention to weeding would enhance the overall appearance of the park.