



Marking Sheet 2016

Part 1

(for entrants)

Name of entry: WALDRIDGE	Judges: EILEEN BURN, SABINA ROSE
Category: B1	Judging dates: April 14/July 22, 2016
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Medal level:

Spring judging	Silver Gilt
Horticultural Achievement	Silver Gilt
Environmental Responsibility	Silver Gilt
Community Participation	Silver Gilt
Overall	SILVER GILT

COMMENTS:

Overall summary:

The town of Waldrige is somewhat unusual in that there is no business district; it consists of a small older village, a large residential estate, Waldrige Fell Country Park SSSI, estimable allotments and excellent residential gardens. The village green is furnished with equipment that encourages healthy activity. Waldrige's Bloom Group have a hard working and enthusiastic core team well supported

demonstrate respect for the environment, and to give an overall impression of tidiness and pride, despite ongoing problems with litter and vandalism. The sense of community shines out, and this quote from a resident illustrates the point: "Waldridge is a lovely place to live and we are lucky to live here".

SPRING JUDGING:

Areas of achievement:

The entry is neat and well cared-for. Colourful spring bulbs and flowers in the town and the residential gardens, and healthy vegetables and flowers in the allotments, demonstrate a high level of horticultural expertise within the Bloom group and residents alike. Publicity is thorough, support from the few local businesses is strong, and awareness of environmental factors is demonstrated admirably, giving an overall impression of care and attention to detail.

Areas for development:

The numerous beds scattered around the entry had colourful spring planting which will hopefully spread over time to prevent weeds establishing, and to cover the bare soil. We felt there are two areas which might be improved upon: Firstly, some of the beds look seriously tiny and out of proportion to the areas where they are located, and this applies also to the single tubs. Secondly, both beds and tubs could benefit from more height - crowning of the beds, and taller sustainable planting in the centres would provide more impact and give a good backdrop for annuals. Pots could be grouped, and investment could be considered in stackable planters or hanging basket trees. Consideration might also be given to giving beds and planters a more "designerly" feel by introducing interesting colour, height and texture combinations.

A small amount of litter in the Fell car park, and some dog fouling and weeds by the play park at the Parish Hall were noticed. The problem of dog fouling over the fell which is changing the composition of the soil, might benefit from informing the public *why* they are asked to remove it from everywhere, not just the paths.

The area's mining heritage is represented on a number of sculptures.

SUMMER JUDGING

SECTION A – Horticultural achievement

Areas of achievement:

The entrances are lovely and some of the street signage had good floral embellishment. Eye-catching and colourful beds and planters are seen in grassed areas along the roads, and there are many beautifully kept gardens in the residential area and the old village. The allotments contain luxuriant flowers among the abundant vegetables and fruits, and flowers adorn the car park and verges on the site. The one pub has made a commendable effort with its hanging baskets, troughs and barrels, and the SSSI is a welcoming natural area of greenery, wildflowers and heather.

Seedlings and cuttings are grown from plugs, which the helpful local nursery nurtures in polytunnels for the town until they are needed. The group have planted 27 ten-year old trees this year. On the Millennium Green, where they hold the town events, they have pruned back some trees and

removed others which they will replace with smaller and more natural trees and plants, and also opened up a footpath and planted fritillaries and daffodils in a boggy area, and maintain several fruit and nut trees.

The Bloom group follow a careful plan to ensure that there is always spring, summer, autumn and winter colour to be seen, and continue to improve the planting scheme with home grown plants and spring and autumn bulb planting.

Areas for development:

Although some variety has been introduced with interestingly shaped beds, these will have more impact when they are increased in size and, ideally, if they could demonstrate more cohesion in their design, aiming for more innovation, less random colour, and less reliance on mixed begonias and bedding, for a more contemporary feel.

Some street signs showed weedkiller damage and remnants of chickweed; it would be a good idea to develop a sign strategy to avoid more weedkiller damage from the Council. The problem of weeds continue sporadically, along the fence at the Parish Rooms and along a few weedy gutters.

SECTION B – Environmental responsibility

Areas of achievement:

The Waldrige Fells SSSI has been earmarked as a priority site for the new ranger, who is ably aided by a strong voluntary group. The volunteers carry out litter picking every other weekend throughout the year in conjunction with the Hermitage school, the Scouts and other local groups and individuals. The Scouts have also planted wild flowers on the fells.

The volunteers regularly remove birch seedlings and carry out bracken bashing, avoiding any harm to the many partridges found there. The site contains a stretch of new "birds-mouth" fencing, way-markers and strategic dog poo bins. There has been good regeneration of heather. The dene hosts many trout, and Bloom members transfer there each year buckets of stranded frogspawn from the Millennium Green. A good variety of birds and wildflowers can be found on the fell. An Easter Sunrise service is performed on the fell, and a Beacon Party was held there to celebrate the Queen's 90th birthday.

Elsewhere, the boggy area on Millennium Green has been planted with snakeshead fritillaries and dwarf daffodils. The Parish Council has funded the refurbishment of a footpath here, and volunteers will be laying out the hardcore and the new surface. Probationers are also involved in the maintenance work in the village and on the fell.

Sculptures are placed as welcome signs around the Parish: nine wooden or metal sculptures depicting flora and fauna around the fells and details of the rich mining heritage. A circular paved area on Millennium Green contains bricks painted by children.

In the allotments care is taken to recycle garden waste and create compost on site; there are already 12 ponds (with more being constructed), containing frogs and newts which, with the help of the hedgehogs enjoying their hedgehog house, help to cut down the slug population. 60% of the plots have their own water butts. Wildflowers are being planted along the fence and there are mainly

sustainable plants adorning the car park, which is a blaze of colour with its fantastic variety of flowering perennials and self-seeded annuals in its three seasonal beds, boxes and boat feature. Work has been carried out reducing the height of hedgerows to eliminate fly-tipping.

Areas for development:

On the fell, disappointingly, considering the sterling efforts of all involved, there was some litter to be seen around benches and along verges on the periphery. It is clear that much consideration is being given to solving this problem. Funding is awaited from the County Council to improve the notice boards, some of which are unsatisfactory. More information for the public to explain the negative effects of dog fouling on the ecology of the soil ought to be included.

At the allotments, plans are being drawn up to create an orchard with benches in an unused strip of land alongside the fence and it will be good to see how this develops.

Information for the public about the nut trees on Millennium Green would reassure them that the filberts are edible and that they are welcome to compete with the squirrels in enjoying them.

In the built-up areas, some of the tubs look a little past their best and it would be good to see them with a fresh coat of paint.

SECTION C – Community participation

Areas of achievement:

The Bloom Group of between 8 and 9 people meet once a month to discuss plans and allocate tasks. They receive support from other individuals who organise regular coffee mornings to raise money for items such as top dressing and compost. The Parish Council is apparently showing ever more interest and its support has grown.

Local nursery owner Dave Sadler provides invaluable support by watering the beds and planters twice a week. A number of residents voluntarily also water some beds and tubs; and ad hoc litter pickers include the Scouts and a group called the Waldrige Wombles, who also tend a flowerbed in front of their houses. There has been a slight improvement in persuading neighbours to adopt specific areas.

Interest in the Bloom initiative is reinforced through activities such as their annual garden competition, the best hanging basket/planter competition, childrens' wellie planting, a flower show and Fun Day. Pupils from the Hermitage school have planted a bed with a smiley face.

Community activities include "Beating the Bounds", an ancient custom where old and young members of the community walk the boundaries of the Parish. A beacon was lit on the fell for the Queen's 90th birthday. Funding is secured from donations received at events on the Green, sponsorship of flower beds by local businesses, coffee mornings and craft fairs. Publicity regarding In Bloom activities is to be found on the Parish Council Facebook page and website, in the Parish Newsletter, and a notice board in the pub.

The Parish Rooms display past achievements of Waldrige in Bloom, and resident Brenda Bell has created a scrapbook showing some of the history of Waldrige.

Areas for development:

It would help Dave Sadler if more people could be persuaded regularly to water beds or containers near their houses.

Might it help to draw out even more volunteers if the team were to wear In Bloom identification such as teeshirts or vests while they are working to make them seem as approachable as possible, perhaps?

Although the area's mining heritage is represented on a few intriguing small sculptures, no other striking visual clues testifying to the impact this history has had on the town are on show.

Finally, it would be very helpful to judges if the portfolio were expanded a little, to loosely follow the points on the marking sheet where possible, and to include an itinerary and a map of the route they will be taking.