



Judges Notes for spring 2016

Category 1B: Village

Upper Hopton

Introduction

We were delighted to come to Upper Hopton on such a lovely spring day. It is always a pleasure to meet a group of such dedicated and enthusiastic people. The group obviously take a real pride in their Village and the community is really benefitting from their efforts. It is good to see so many people coming together to support the group's efforts. Upper Hopton is a really vibrant community with so many events to celebrate together, this is a lovely place.

Section A: Horticultural Achievement

Areas of Achievement

The daffodils all around the village and in the churchyard really filled the community with the spirit of spring. The spring bedding was a blaze of colour and we were impressed by the quality of all the planting. Obviously the groups work in splitting and overwintering many plants is paying off. The way the group work to mow grassy areas around the communities is of great credit to them. The churchyard with its wildlife provision, mass of daffodils and flower beds is well maintained. The garden and wild flower planting around the car park at Croft House really enhances the area.

Areas for Improvement

Perhaps it might be possible to plant native bluebells around the carpark. Replace grasses around the tulip beds which are tending to gap with fresh ones. Other possible edgings could be dwarf cat mint or heucheras. Perhaps it might be possible to put information boards in the wild life area to give visitors an idea of what they might see. The area around the phone box which is already a village focal point could be used to give information on the history of the village. If space allows in the wildlife area add early nectar sources such as witchhazel. Perhaps also native berrying shrubs. Consider planting lavender near the church to bring butterflies fluttering round the church door.

Section B: Environmental Responsibility

Areas of Achievement

It was good to see that wildlife is valued and protected, with wildlife areas and corridors round the village. It was good to see so many bird boxes and log and habitat piles provided for wildlife. The heritage of the village is obviously valued and all the research done on village members lost in WW1 is very impressive. We were pleased to see the efforts made to use the group's own compost and to harvest rainwater. The area was free from litter and graffiti. Planting around the bus stop areas must be appreciated by residents.

Areas for Improvement

In the woodland and wood edge areas perhaps wildlife friendly planting would be appropriate. Some plants suitable for shady areas might include, more foxgloves, bugles, single columbines, cranesbills, deadnettles, red campion, wild strawberries, wood violets, wood sage or wood forget me not. Perhaps it might be possible to have heritage interpretation boards around the village. Perhaps by the phone box, which is already a focal point. Mention of the tenter stones in the boundary marker might be a good idea. Planting tubs or herbs in places where people sit might be an idea and this would bring insects, especially butterflies into the town.

Section C: Community Participation

Areas of Achievement

The group is an important and valuable part of the community and we are confident it will continue far into the future. The group have made great efforts to involve the community and it is pleasing to see all the support they rightly receive. We were impressed by the group's year round activities and with the amount of community events the group are involved with. Clearly great efforts are being made to obtain funding and support. The range of skills which the group have is impressive.

Areas for Improvement

Perhaps get an A board with the group's logo or details to put out at work parties, perhaps with the hope of getting more volunteers. A board with the latest news of the groups projects might be of interest to residents and again perhaps attract volunteers. To get younger people interested in gardening consider a young gardener award for the village. Consider community outings to gardens of interest locally.