

Congleton In Bloom- Wash Up Meeting
Tuesday 10th September

ATTENDEES: Bob Edwards (VOL) Ruth Burgess (OFFICER), David Brown (CLLR), Glen Williams (CLLR), Russell Chadwick (CLLR), Sue Conway (VOL)

Notes :

A meeting to discuss how the North West in Bloom Judging two days went on 14th and 15th August 2024

- Acknowledgement of emails from Cllr S Mead and Volunteer P Pinto, regarding :
 - Sending out marking sheets to all the IYN before judging next year so the volunteer groups have an idea of what the judges expect
 - All IYN groups if they so wish can purchase t-shirts to show their own brand – grants for these can be requested from many Congleton Grant giving groups – Ask to see in any Congleton In Bloom Working group members require a Purple Congleton In Bloom T-shirt, these are only to be worn for Congleton In Bloom activities, not IYN activities.
 - Due to storm damage on the polytunnel, all members were aware that there would be a rush in getting the back-to-back garden project set up once the repairs had been done and signed off
- More support is needed around the volunteer's gardens, separate meetings to be held with the team, with a reduction of sites needed, and sites passed back to streetscape.
- Going forward NW In Bloom requesting a 10-site max on full in bloom judging route to allow time at each site and the judges to take on board all aspects of each site and not to feel rushed – action separate meeting to be arranged to talk about the route and the chosen 10 sites
- It is not necessary to have a new project each year it could just be improvements on a site to increase a certain subject matter (biodiversity, community support etc)
- Ensure the portfolio as per previous years goes on the website as well as the PowerPoint presentation
- Set dates for both portfolio and presentation to be completed by the end of June, to allow all group members to view and make comments as well as send off for editing and printing
- ALL photos are to be sent in as soon as they are taken to Ruth, Ruth will then save them all in a named file so we are not chasing or searching for photos when they are needed for presentations, display boards etc
- Any documentation any of the IYN groups create, Congleton Town Council will print for all the groups
- Action to arrange a separate meeting with Sue C regarding the Community Garden
- Action – arrange a meeting with park volunteers
- Reminder of North West In Bloom results day 30th and 31st October at Bolton, max 3 tickets per group this includes in Bloom groups and IYN groups, names can go on a waiting list but highly likely will not be fulfilled due to 140 in bloom entries and 16 schools all going on the 31st October In Bloom, max capacity seating at Bolton 330.
- Big focus on a new starting point for a route for 2025

See below break down of the judging route with comments on how each site went; (Appendix A)

NWIB Judging Day - Congleton In Bloom on 14 August 2024

NWIB 2024 Large Town Category, lunch plus 3 IYN groups & 1 business & Congleton park

Time	Location	Section	Meet and greet by:	COMMENTS	On the day Notes	After Judging Comments
	<i>NWIB Judges</i>					
08.30-8.55	Arrive at AMVC, welcome to CIB team, refreshments, comfort break					
9.00 15m max	Astbury Mere Visitor Centre Presentation	C1, C2, C3	D. Brown, plus In Bloom team at VC: BE, GW, MG, PP, RC, RB, SC		DB – Welcome and PowerPoint with talk over	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Presentation Time Scale so all members can see before hand - Voice over judges welcomed and thought was different - Less people on bus went well , judges made comment to this
Congleton in Bloom main tour begins						
<i>Travel in the mini bus – DB (Chair), BE (Time Keeper), PP (photographer) and handover at each site</i>						
		Driver	2 NWIB judges		GW –	
9.15 15m	Astbury Mere Country Park – Eco centre Green flag holder. Outside: biodiversity, conservation, wildlife/ wildflower areas, view of AMCP	A1- 4, B1-3,	Meet Astbury Mere Ranger Matt Axford AM Trustees Chair MG & wildlife expert (displays)	Discuss proposed extension to wildlife area (orchard, seating 10K grant)	Mark 4 mins and Margaret 5min speaking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Mark Stubbs does not get long enough - Need more walking and talking - Has the site lost its wow now we can not see the mere?
9.30	Drive along A34 to					
9.35 25m	Alexandra Court Hotel grounds (Business)	A1-4 C2	If owner Andy Bourne is not there on the day Jane will be there in his absence		Handover to Andy or Jane	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Andy met with the judges lovely welcome good site went down well - Can be added to 2nd day
5m	Drive & view sustainably planted roundabout at Tesco express, continue along A34 to					
10.00 15m	<i>New Life Church Allotment Garden (Jubilee Club)</i>		<i>Steve Hodgkinson & NLC volunteers,</i>	<i>Make sure NLC are available</i>	<i>Handover to Lyndsey and Steve (Jeff)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Entered as a last minute</i> - <i>Excellent display</i> - <i>Lindsey was very positive and enthusiastic</i>
	Walk to					
10.15 10m	Elizabeth's Garden, West Rd,	A1-4 B1-3, C1-3	Community gardeners, e.g. Kath Bratt, John Sherwood Elizabeth's group Heather Seddon	Spiral garden partially replanted	Handover to Susan Munro and Patti	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Time went over on this site, need to look at time slot for next year - Need to ensure visitors keep to the timing
	Return to vehicle					
10.30	<i>View as we drive along St Mary's Church from vehicle</i>	A1-4, B3 C1				-
2-3m	Fire station roundabout					
10.35 5m	Stirling Close: Biodiversity site May Need longer at site (10m)	B C	<i>CTC Suzy Firkin Volunteer Patti Pinto, resident Rebecca Franklin</i>	<i>Hedge laid, orchard extended, hazel coppiced, wildflowers sown/planted</i>	<i>Handover to Ruth Burgess and Suzy F</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Signage to be re sited</i> - <i>Adrian and Suzy firkin met on site with judges</i> - <i>Like the new addition</i> - <i>Seating to be added</i> - <i>Look at sponsorship for the site</i> - <i>Work with residents more</i>

10.40	Two Bears' Roundabout (Community Pride Little Gem & heritage story), drive all along <u>Mountbatten Way</u> , (floral displays) Drive back to town	A1-4 B1	DB story of two bears Partnership sponsorship			- Need to add cosmos back into the roundabout (bear)
10.50 10m	Stop at Fairground car park to view Dutch wall & Food4free garden (drop to 5m)	A1-4 B1, 3	meet Volunteer gardeners & F4F volunteers Sue Conway, Janet, Val & Alec Scaresbrook		Handover to Val	Dutch Wall – needs more colour and add plants for drought dry conditions, does the site add anything ?? Fairground car park back bed - Great addition - Judges like talking to Val and Alec
	View bus station, taxi rank, continue to Colehill Bank					
11.05 10m	CWMH Canal Rd Visit new wellbeing garden	A, B, C	Meet staff, patients, volunteer gardeners		Handover to patti	- Last minute addition for IYN judges went back the following day to be judged - Lovely mix of people on site, volunteers, nurses, patients
11.20 25m	IYN Bath House & Physic Garden, Colehill Bank (L%)	A1-4 B1-3 C1-3	Meet volunteers from IYN group.		Handover to vanessa and John	- Brilliant site volunteers very enthusiastic - Good labelling of the plants and informative
	Walk down Colehill Bank to start					
	Town Centre (walking tour)		All CIB at different points			
11.45 5m 25m	Treo statue, IYN Friends of Community Garden, (L5) (Community Pride Little Gem, Tree of light, Garden of Reflection)	B1,3 A1-4, B1-3 C1-3	Treo statue: Jackie MacArthur ? Community gardeners PP, SC, MG, KB, JP, JS, RG Rotary?	St Peters in portfolio & display	David B = Treo talk Handover to Sue C and Patti – community garden	Community Garden - Judges seem enthusiastic about the site - Concerned over lack of attention had this year due to other volunteer site - A lot of work needed – tree work, police have been involved due the amount of ASB
12.20 10m	Town Hall & other buildings: heritage	B	DB, Kay Wesley (Town Mayor) and Ian (museum)		Walk and talk Ian to wildlife at back of town hall Then walk to town centre – David to talk	
5m	Town hall comfort break if needed					
12.35	Walk through town centre, view planters, baskets, shops, flower towers, Elizabeth's statue,	A, B, C	RC, RB Elizabeth group at statue,	CMQ?	Two ladies at Elizabeth statue Only walking to statue and return	Town centre walk through – Tiers failure – a lot of the black plastic on show Back of town hall = heart wildflowers judges like the idea and working with rotary like the change of a piece of waste land which is now maintained Town centres – bedding plants looked well added colour
12.50	drive to Mountbatten Way, turn into Worrall St View Congleton Paddling pool & theatre planters. Park and stop at car park, Park Rd					To paddling pool rota opening times so that the pool is open when you drove past The troughs on Mountbatten way looked very well
13.05	LUNCH break		Stock at the pavilion			Lunch – based in the park by the Bee Garden

40m						Look in to buffet options for next year Nice fresh buffet works well in the park Nice to see a variety volunteers from IYN More formal members to be briefed so when introduced to the judges they are aware of the campaign all invites to put through the group - Driver concerns over rushed from dropping of the judged and parking up look into time keeping
13.50 15m	Community Gardening Festival including Back-to-back gardens, young peoples' Gardens & WDT Wheelbarrow Challenge, displays. [Theme: Number 10, RHS Bloom 60 & friendship]	A, B C	PP, Meet young designers & gardeners WDT Wheelbarrow Challenge, meet the gardeners <i>Trees for Congleton tree nursery & orchard nursery</i>		Handover to patti	- Back to back gardens success , note that there was less entries this year – can we find out why are we going to be reduced even more next year? - Look into the admin of inviting the display group and wheelbarrow entries - Make more of a feature of the water pump - Mindful of the weather whilst waiting in the Polly tunnel
14.05 15m	Press call	C2	Local press & radio	Chronicle, Nub News, Churnet & Beartown Radios		
14.20 25m	IYN Friends of Congleton Park, (L5) (16 Green Flag holder, 4x Heritage Flag) sustainable borders, bug hotel, compost bays, Discuss the park and their contribution with Friends of Congleton Park volunteers	A1-4 B1-3 C1-3	RB, Meet Streetscape gardeners Stock at the pavilion IYN FoCP volunteers. Rotary	NWIB IYN L5	Handover to Glen and Ruth walk and talk, a Boat – Rangers Hot and cold bed, Patti, Sue Margaret and John Bee Garden – Patti and team	- Flower bed by the tree before the bandstand need weeding on the morning (sustainable bed) - Comments regarding changed to boat bed in the last week before judging (all last minute) turf over the tree beds all plants to be saved - Remaining floral beds look fantastic
5m	<i>Rickshaw ride around the park to</i>					- Judged loved this a nice quirky addition
14.50 10m	Just Bee garden	A, B, C	Meet Patti and volunteers New golden bee trail			- Bee garden last minute jobs on the site before judging look into who does what volunteers and streetscape - Bushes around the perimeter need some sort of cutting back to stop any ASB
15.00 15.30 NWIB Park assess't 30m	Congleton Park Tour of formal planting in park Jubilee Gardens & floral plaque (100y Congleton War Memorial Hospital). Wildflower meadow, historic trees, lime avenue, playing fields, bowling green etc St Stephen's Gate (display), view edge of Town Wood, park allotment, hedgehog homes, bird houses etc	A1-4 B1 -3 C1-3	Interpretation boards Allotment Streetscape NWIB Park judging, year 5 (4 RHS Gold medals)	? displays for IYNs & other projects not on the tour		See notes above in FoCP section

CIB 3h C park 30m 3 x IYN 1h 30m presentation 15m press 15m 1 x business 30m
[3x IYN 30 mins each FoCP, CBHPG FoCG 1 business Alexandra Court 30m]
total: 6h plus 45m lunch break i.e. start at 9.00 - 15.45 this schedule (draft 3) has 20minutes slippage time (CMQ visit?)