

BEST KEPT VILLAGE COMPETITION 2016 – JUDGES' COMMENTS TUTBURY

BKV awareness was tackled through details on the Tutbury website and in the Village News. A handful of BKV posters were seen in shop windows and elsewhere in the village. However, there were none at the village entrances, in pub windows or on noticeboards. Judges felt that there should have been more in a village the size of Tutbury at strategic locations, so that residents and visitors would be aware that the village had entered BKV.

Although the entry form indicated that children's posters would be displayed in "High Street shops", no posters were seen during the competition, despite careful searches. This was disappointing because well-sited children's poster displays can do a great deal to bring BKV to the attention of both residents and visitors.

All noticeboards were in good condition; and notices were displayed neatly.

There was a wide range of up-to-date local information, covering Parish Council matters, local organisations and events, etc. However, there was nothing on recycling or dog fouling awareness.

The surrounds of St Mary's Church were in good order, with well mown grass, clean and tidy paths, tidy grave areas, good seats/benches and noticeboard. "It was impressively tidy for such a large churchyard." (July judges) The surrounds and car park of the Roman Catholic Church were untidy and weedy in May; but the situation was much improved in June, when judges described them as "tidy and litter-free". The surrounds of the Congregational Church were very well cared for throughout the judging period.

The surrounds and car park of the Village Hall and the Health Centre varied during the competition. They were tidy enough in May; neat and tidy, but with a few weeds in June; and good in July – "The frontage was excellent, with good hanging baskets and planted areas, but disappointing at the rear, with overgrown weedy borders and paved areas needing a good sweep up" (July judges). The surrounds of the Scout Hut and Youth Centre were untidy throughout the judging period – with much litter and many weeds around.

All the pub surrounds and car parks were clean and tidy overall, with no weeds or litter generally. Several had very attractive, well-kept beer gardens, attractive planting and planters and some had very good hanging baskets.

The Duke Street telephone box was very grubby inside, with lots of cobwebs; "it needed a good brush out" (May judges). The surrounds were very untidy with lots of long grass, weeds and some litter. The condition of the door handle made it very difficult to get into and judges wondered just how much it was used. In all it looked very uncared for and neglected by all!

The bus shelters were in good condition and generally clean and tidy inside; but judges felt that the opportunity to display BKV and children's posters had been missed. There were weeds and long grass around the outside of some bus shelters and the surrounds of the Holts Lane one were very weedy indeed.

All the seats and benches were in good condition, but some will soon need some paint/varnish. Their surrounds were litter and weed free.

Judges did not find the tourist map at all helpful in trying to identify significant village features. However, they commented on the excellent large tubs with attractive, well maintained flowers in places; the large floral feature on the Burton Road island was especially admired. The Three Stones feature in Mill Park was also described as "impressive".

The war memorial area was clearly well looked after and was weed and litter-free. There was also a very good new information board.

The Cornmill Lane playing fields were well maintained, with tidy grass; but marred in June and July by significant litter. The Cricket Ground was also well cared for, but again spoiled by some litter along the footpath in May.

All the verges and small open spaces were well mown, tidy and litter free. Judges in June noted that these grass areas needed mowing, but felt that heavy rain for most of the previous week had probably affected the grass cutting schedule.

With a few exceptions, private gardens were generally maintained to a very good standard throughout the village.

The equipment and safety surfaces at all the play areas were good: and the areas were generally clean and tidy. The only criticism of the play areas was that the one at Portway Drive/Cromwell Close was unfenced – which might result in problems of dog mess, broken glass and other litter.

The map was not laminated, which posed problems for judges in rainy conditions in May and June! It was not easy to identify the BKV features to be judged because the BKV reference numbers within the coloured circles were very difficult to decipher and some of the colours used were too similar for easy recognition. It might be worth using some different symbols, such as squares and triangles, rather than just using circles. The map lacked a scale and north point and judges would have welcomed the central area detail provided in the past. Village features should be identified on the map (see comment above about the tourist map). There are examples of very good BKV maps available for reference at the Community Council offices, which might provide useful guidance: and I would be happy to advise if required. You could contact me on 01785 713241.

There was an impressive absence of litter in Tutbury (except where referred to above): and no dog mess. The only significant litter problem identified was in July, when the recycling bins on the main car park were overwhelmed because quantities of commercial waste had been deposited there. Judges found it difficult to assess the amount of community awareness and involvement in BKV. They felt that more BKV publicity and children's posters would help to increase BKV awareness.

Judges said that Tutbury was "a generally clean and tidy village, with character and history". The open spaces, children's play areas and the general appearance of all the pubs were particular highlights. More work on BKV publicity, the number and siting of both BKV and children's posters and a "refreshed" map would provide the basis for more BKV awareness of, and hopefully involvement by residents in BKV. Tutbury continues to maintain good standards and its record of participation in BKV is unrivalled. The hard work undertaken this year was rewarded by an excellent Third Place in the Large Village Category in the East Staffordshire in 2016. Well done and good luck in 2017.

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