

PARISHES IN BLOOM HANDBOOK 2023

South & South East in Bloom is part of Britain in Bloom and an independent charity working across the Southern England Counties of; Kent, Surrey, East & West Sussex, Hampshire (including the Isle of Wight) East & North Dorset and East Wiltshire.



A Welcome from Jim Buttress VMH – Our Patron



Welcome to South and South East in Bloom's entrant's manual, and I hope the information contained will be of value on your Bloom Journey.

Bloom has been a significant part of my life, and it has always been a pleasure to meet people engaged in gardening and horticulture and caring for their communities wherever they may be.

Being part of the regional competitions and campaign and therefore part of Britain in Bloom gives communities big and small an opportunity to be recognised for their efforts to maintain attractive and well-managed places.

From small communities where a few people are caring for their patch to Large Towns & Cities, all are part of the South & South East in Bloom Family.

An assessment from South & South East in Bloom provides positive reinforcement of the community's efforts and an opportunity to receive advice and feedback from an experienced horticultural judge.

I wish you the very best of luck with this year's competition.

Jim Buttress VMH



The Honourable Lady Fiona Barttelot Patron

I am pleased to join South & South East in Bloom as a patron. As a keen gardener myself, I understand the efforts to create attractive gardens and fill them with beautiful plants. I sincerely hope you all have a successful Bloom 2023.

The Honourable Lady Fiona Barttelot of Stopham House, West Sussex, seen here with her husband, Sir Brian. .

A Welcome from the Chairman

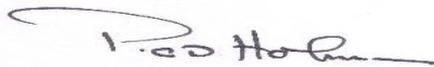
Welcome to the 2023 South & South East in Bloom Parishes Manual. We hope the information provided will help you prepare your entry for a judge/assessor's visit. This year more than ever, gardeners everywhere can make a real difference in responding to the climatic changes we see. Variable weather systems, too much rain, too little rain and concerns about our region's scarce resources, such as water, impact how we garden. Plant losses due to the heavy frosts this winter and the likelihood of another dry summer put pressure on us all as gardeners. So whether you are an individual gardener, a community gardener or a professional caring for our larger entries, we would love to hear your stories and the actions to put gardening at the centre of change. As time goes on, we would like to see more sustainable perennial planting, more significant conservation of our scarce resources and increasing biodiversity to protect our wildlife.

Bloom as a campaign is undoubtedly more relevant today than ever before, with as much emphasis on the environment and community as horticulture and gardening. We see the immense value of communities and volunteers working to improve their place. Bringing people together, increasing the quality of life, improving well-being and mental health, and the de-stressing effect of working outdoors make Bloom very special. Over the next few years, we at South & South East in Bloom will do all we can to make Bloom as relevant as possible and provide a framework where we can all play our part in conserving our way of life, and I hope you will join us on this journey.

South & South East in Bloom, thanks you for all you do and your support for our region. We sincerely hope that you find gardening and conserving our native habitats as stimulating as we do and that you will find a visit from our judges/assessors to be positive and enjoyable.

Have a great year.

This year's theme is 'Colours for the Coronation' with an award for the best display.



**Peter Holman FCIHort, CPP-I, NDH, DMS, ITD Dip
Chairman**

When the judge contacts you to arrange a date please respond as the sooner the date is sorted the sooner everyone can start planning

Introduction to South and South East in Bloom

South and South-East in Bloom is an independent charity, a limited company by guarantee and part of the Royal Horticultural Society's Britain in Bloom campaign. It is the largest horticultural competition in the region, involving hundreds of communities each year.

South & South East in Bloom covers Kent, Surrey, East & West Sussex, Isle of Wight, Hampshire, parts of East & North Dorset and East Wiltshire.

Our competitions aim to find the best Villages, Towns, Cities, Coastal Resorts, Parishes, Town and City Centres, Urban



Communities, and Business Improvement Districts within our region.

The competitions are not just about the larger entries; we are also about the smaller community groups that do so much to preserve and enhance their local environment. Not just about flowers, hanging baskets and window boxes, the Bloom campaign is also about protecting our environment, conserving our species-rich landscapes and promoting sound environmental management and care where we can. We would like to see communities more involved and caring for their local environment.

South & South in Bloom is an inclusive campaign, and any community, no matter how small or large, can get involved.

South & South East in Bloom is a unique campaign that enables communities to work across different areas and address several issues. This is the only campaign taking this more integrated approach to community improvement and uses gardening & horticulture as its foundation. Participating communities focus their initiatives on three main areas: Horticultural Achievement, Environmental Responsibility and Community Participation

This means "in Bloom" communities tackle everything from litter, graffiti and anti-social behaviour to conservation, sustainability and improving horticultural and garden features, and that's not to mention the positive impact on a sense of place, community spirit and pride.

Benefits of participation

Communities that participate in South & South in Bloom benefit in a variety of ways, but the most common benefits are:



- Cleaner and greener surroundings.
- Creating a sense of community by improving public spaces and positive interaction between community members.
- An increase in local and civic pride and a sense of community empowerment by engaging people in improving their community.
- Safer environments for the enjoyment of local people, a reduction in anti-social behaviour.
- Regeneration of run down and disadvantaged areas.
- Long term improvement for the environment by addressing sustainability, resource management, conservation, litter, graffiti etc.
- Positive effects on the local economy include increased commercial enterprise and increased tourism.

Parishes in Bloom

Parishes in Bloom is a competitive category which enables Parish Councils and their community to seek recognition for the work undertaken to care for the Parish Community.



It's an opportunity for Parish's to see what is involved in becoming involved with South & South East in Bloom and perhaps ultimately in Britain in Bloom.

Each entry receives a visit from an experienced assessor and is assessed under simple criteria, see below.

To receive external third-party validation from an organisation that has been assessing, judging and advising Villages, Towns, Cities and community groups for well over 40 years and who is part of Britain in Bloom.

This assessment is designed to cause the least disruption to the business of managing the Parish. It is just a question of identifying the many well-managed features that make up a Parish and provide feedback suggesting areas which might be improved or further developed. Suggestions will, of course, be realistic and mindful of the resources available, and of course to receive recognition for the achievements.

The category is:

- Requires some preparations before a visit.
- Visits are up to a maximum of one and a half hours depending on the size of entry
- The entry can be walked or a combination of walking and driving as required
- Assessments will take place from Mid-June to Mid July
- Receive recognition at a Regional Award Ceremony, if held

What the assessors would like to see:

Community Involvement

- Assessors would like to understand the level of involvement from the community or voluntary groups or individuals especially in the areas of gardening and conservation.
- Are local people involved in decision-making about the appearance of the Parish and how decisions are communicated & implemented?
- The level of partnership working with local groups and local organisations (i.e. police, environmental groups etc.)

Environmental Responsibility

- What action is being taken to conserve the natural & built environment particularly the protection of local habitats, & heritage buildings?
- Examples of local composting either collected wastes or community composting.
- Evidence of the creation or the maintaining or improving green spaces (Village Greens, parks & pocket parks, verges, woodlands, churchyards etc.).
- The Parish Council is engaged in addressing environmental issues such as the control of Fly-tipping, Fly-posting, Litter, Graffiti & Dog fouling and conserving natural resources.

Maintenance - Gardening, Horticulture & Tree Maintenance, Street Furniture

- Evidence of delivering good gardening, horticultural and tree management practices.
- The Parish Council encourages residents to care for their gardens, allotments, shop and business frontages etc.
- Residential gardens are generally cared for and enhance the parishes appearance.
- Parish signs and entrances are welcoming
- Parish street Furniture (seating, Bins, signage etc) is well maintained.

Judging Times Allowance:

Parishes in Bloom - up to 1 1/2 hours

Note: If a Parish has more than one village within its boundary ideally the assessor should only be shown the principle village. However, if it's appropriate to show all of the areas within the Parish this must be within the maximum time stated (1 1/2 hours) and the host must provide the transport required to visit these areas.

The Judging Visit

The visit should be a planned route, within the time allowed, around your entry and should highlight how your activities and efforts meet the marking criteria.

While we accept this tour will only be a "snapshot" in time and that we will not be able to see all that you have achieved, please try to include as much as possible in the time allowed. Take care not to show too much of one aspect or feature of your entry to the detriment of any other.

Certificates of Excellence

Parishes may have up to 10 Blank certificates of excellence to give to individuals, groups, business or sponsors as a thank you for their support for your entry through the year. Requests for these certificates must be made no later than 21st July, and the certificates will be available at the annual award ceremony. The certificates are left blank for you to fill in the details.

Discretionary Awards 2023

The Judges Award

Awarded to the entry who has achieved high standards in one of the core pillars of Bloom, Horticulture, Gardening, Environmental Management or Community development.

The Trustees Award

Awarded to an individual or group within an entry who have encouraged the involvement of young people, those with disabilities or have created a diverse and inclusive community through their competitions & campaigns.

The Outstanding Contribution Award

This award is presented to an individual who in the opinion of judges or trustees has made an outstanding contribution over many years (a minimum of 10 years). This may be committee membership, managing the campaign, raising funds, designing and planting schemes, volunteering , supporting local people or any other form of support that is considered meritorious.

Chairman's Award

The Chairman's Award may be awarded to an individual, group, community or project that differs from any other award.

Checklist

1. Have you provided South and South East in Bloom with a mobile phone number, which should be **switched on**, in case the judges need to reach you on the day of the tour?
2. Bearing in mind the **strict timetable**, have you carefully timed your route and had practice runs to ensure that you stay within the time allocation on the day of judging? (Judges will take a negative view if the tour overruns and may cease judging.)
3. Have you informed the judge of any road works, events etc. which will delay their arrival time with you?
4. Have you briefed all of your tour guides, and community representatives meeting the judges?
5. Have you allowed for refreshments and comfort breaks?
6. Have you prepared for differing weather conditions?
7. Have you carefully studied the marking sheet, ensuring that every aspect is covered between your route, your presentation and your judges briefing notes?
8. Have you ensured that you will be showing the assessors/judges a balanced tour covering all aspects of the criteria if possible?
9. Have you ensured there is a general awareness in the community about your “in Bloom” activities and the fact that you are in the regional challenge?
10. If you wish to offer the assessors/judges lunch or afternoon tea, please make this known to the judges when they first contact you.

South & South East in Bloom Diary Dates 2023

31st March – Closing date for registering for Desk-top Entries

30th April - Closing date for registering for Environmental Challenge

24th May – Entrants & Judges Seminar

16th June - Judges Briefing notes due

12th June - 14th July - Parks, Cemeteries, Parishes & It's Your Neighbourhood Judging

26th June - Friday 14th July - Main Categories Judging

14th July - Desk-top entries due

14th July - Environmental Challenge portfolio due

21st July - Requests for certificates of excellence

24th July - Judges' reports and Award nominations due

24th July - 11th August - Britain in Bloom Judging

14th August - Digital images of entries due. These images will be used on screen at the S&SEiB Awards, as well as potentially on the S&SEiB website and in the newsletter.

September – Awards TBC

1st December - On-line system open for 2024 entries

Contacts

For all enquiries/queries please contact:-

Anne Holman or Kate Harris

South & South East Campaign Managers

124 Gravel Hill

Croydon,

Surrey,

CR0 5BF

Phone 020 8662 1021

E-mail anne@sseib.com or kate@sseib.com

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