



South & South East in Bloom - Parishes 2021

Cliffsend Parish Council

Section A - Community Involvement (40% or 40 points)

The Parish is working towards things such as:

- Being inclusive of local people, including Local ownership
- Making a difference to local people & Involving local people in decision-making, communication & implementation
- Representative of the wider local community
- Planning for the future
- Working in partnership with local groups and local organisations (i.e. police, environmental groups etc).
- Working towards access for all.

Total Points Assessed (Out of 40)

7

Section B - Environmental Responsibility (30% or 30 points)

The Parish is engaged in environmental activities such as:

- Conserving local habitats & heritage (wildlife, natural landscapes & built environment)
- Home or community composting, Green Recycling
- Creating, maintaining or improving green spaces (Village Greens, parks & pocket parks, verges, woodlands, churchyards etc.).
- The Parish is engaged in addressing environmental issues such as the control of Fly-tipping, Fly-posting, Litter, Graffiti & Dog fouling.

Total Points Assessed (Out of 30)

15

Section C - Gardening/Horticulture/Conservation Achievement (30% or 30 points)

- The Parish Council is employing good gardening, horticultural and tree management practices.
- The Parish Council encourages residents to care for their gardens, allotments etc.
- That residential gardens are generally well maintained and mostly enhance the parishes appearance.

Total Points Assessed (Out of 30)

10

GRAND TOTAL POINTS ASSESSED

32

LEVEL ACHIEVED Highly Commended

Areas of Achievement

The Chapmans Fields residential gardens were superb as was the communal open space maintenance. The adjoining open space between the above site and the Recreation Ground was well managed and had a pleasing appearance with natural flowing lines to the perimeter wildflower/grassland. The small green in front of the Village Hall was well maintained and very colourful. The remembrance seat was a particularly lovely touch and it was good to see the public benches here being maintained well. The flower choices in the planters were traditional bedding and the Cedar that has been planted will be quite a feature in years to come. There does need to be careful thought in another year about more bee friendly and sustainable planting, perhaps allowing plants to root into the ground rather than containers that require regular watering in drier spells. The lack of rubbish graffiti in the village is commendable and adds to the perception that this is a well loved village by local residents.

Areas for Development

I would like to thank the Parish Clerk for her guiding me around the village. The village of Cliffsend is growing fast it seems and changes are being imposed rather than involving the Parish Council it seems. The new railway Station has cleared a good many trees from a railway embankment is evident for much of the south west of the village. To the south near St Augustine's Cross is another new development of houses. The village lacks shops and even a pub though the closed pub on the Sandwich Road to the south of the site is proposed to be redeveloped with a possible micro pub. Such dramatic changes may however provide new blood to the village for future entries. Alison the Parish Clerk has emphasised that there is keen interest from local residents in being involved in initiatives that will improve the appearance of the village. One key element for next year I think would be to identify a small but responsible core team of volunteers supported and overseen by one or two local Parish Councillors to start the improvements for future Southeast in Bloom entries. It is important to delegate 'in bloom' and not to expect the Clerk or Parish Council Chair to lead these efforts as they will inevitably result in workloads being excessive and either residents feeling frustrated at slow decision making or Parish Council matters being delayed. The residents of Cliffsend are to be commended for the attractiveness of many gardens. Chapman Fields were a particular pleasure with the communal areas being neat and well maintained whilst the private gardens were a good combination of annuals, perennials and shrubs. There was a disappointing area in Oakland Court where the KCC highway management of the shrub bed with an annual visit has resulted in the establishment of vigorous bramble growth that will not be easily rectified and detracts from the appearance of the nearby gardens. However KCC officers as it appears to be open to Parish improvements and Paul Valek the KCC Highways officer has been helpful in finding possible sites for planters in Parish KCC Areas. The new open space grass area between Chapman Fields and the Recreation Ground was a developing pleasant grassland area. The margins showed considerate thought for wildflowers with longer grass being left on the margins but with the cutting regime considerably undulating to create a pleasing line to the eye. The margins also have a number of trees that are now starting to mature as this open space is a relatively recent initiative by the Parish Council and linked I believe in some way to the adjacent housing development. It might be nice to see if further small islands of grass could be left in one or two places to allow further development of grassland wildflowers. These areas are best managed for wildflowers by carrying out an annual cut and collect in either September or October. The removal of the grass cuttings is critical to encouraging wildflowers as these prefer soil with low nutrients and so removal of the grass cuttings will deplete the nutrients that would otherwise rot back into the ground. Increasing the nutrient levels by allowing grass to rot down only serves to encourage stronger and more grass in future years. The allocation of one or two points on the site for the placing of the grass cuttings will avoid the costs of removal which could be costly and the piles as they are left become useful habitats for insects overwintering. It is perhaps an initiative that could involve residents in a positive way. The Parish is contemplating funding for future tree planting but the Parish lacks direct control over land that could be planted. I am wondering if there could be a view to offering residents small whips of suitable native trees for front gardens as the residential areas lack verges in many areas. The Recreation Ground has a good selection of playground equipment supplied and maintained by Thanet District Council and recently enhanced by additional funds from Vattenfall as compensation for disturbance caused to the Cliffsend. The perimeter is a well-established tree and shrub belt. During my visit I saw no litter or graffiti and so the Parish and its residents are to be congratulated as this shows the public spirit is alive and well. The Parish Council has no Facebook or similar links and this is perhaps something that could be investigated with new and more IT conversant residents. The Parish does have a web site but it appears limited to Parish business and not appearing to publicise any 'in bloom' initiatives. I was advised by one Councillor that Covid had delayed the ideas that had been planned and I am sure that like so many other activities this is the major cause of the low level of marks awarded but this in no way reflects what I am sure is possible within the village in future years. The hopeful signs of the country coming out of lockdown in mid-July will I am sure enable the Parish Council to galvanise local support and plan for schemes in 2022. The key is to remember that the core elements of any successful entry centre on evidence of Community effort and then consideration of the environmental responsibility. Links to the nature reserve on the south of the village which is a KCC Country Park would

help score marks. And also the English Heritage St Augustine's Cross offers another opportunity to celebrate the heritage of the site, perhaps links to this body could offer some idea of what they are doing in terms of landscape maintenance for conservation. Bakers Field a new grass area that is establishing again offers a chance perhaps for community involvement, especially in the management of the extensive front meadow grassland that is the other side of the road to the Recreation Ground. Some of the trees that have been planted are appearing to be struggling, which bearing in mind the very dry periods that are occurring is not surprising. I did remark to Alison that in my career the best tree establishment I observed was at Hastings where the tree bases were heavily mulched with woodchips to a depth of 200mm and extended out about 500mm from the tree base at least. Success rates in tree planting were above 95% and this was within verges on roadsides often and so exceptionally good. Paul, your judge, is more than happy to visit and give some guidance of how to achieve greater success.

Results

Level	Description	Points
	Highly Commended	0 - 36
	Bronze	37 - 52
	Silver	53 - 68
	Silver-Gilt	69 - 85
	Gold	86 - 100