

Battle Town Forum 28th April 2021

Topic: Britain in Bloom finals 2022.

Background: In 2020, Battle Town Council was invited to enter the finals in the small-town category, representing the South & SE area. It was again cancelled for 2021, but we are hoping it goes ahead in 2022 and we are invited to enter.

Objectives: The competition is as much about community as it is about flowers and we would like to bring together the various organisations throughout the Town to see how we can all play a part in helping to make the town look really special and come together as a community.

Minutes from Meeting 28th April 2021

Cllr Glenna Favell welcomed attendees and relayed that Battle had previously been invited to enter the 2020 final for the Small Town category of Britain in Bloom but due to Covid it was cancelled. It has again been cancelled in 2021, but we are ever hopeful that the 2022 competition will go ahead and would like to have a plan in place in case Battle is invited to enter the finals again. (We can register to enter the regional South & South East in Bloom competition.)

Glenna then introduced a short film from Truro Council showcasing their entry to the 2019 Britain in Bloom Competition. This was an interesting film and showed how they had achieved community engagement with local organisations and schools. They had created various events including a Plant Market, a seed drive and a number of initiatives focused on the natural environment and how it benefits the community.

They also had a theme of Hedgehogs which they created from environmentally friendly resources and located Hedgehogs throughout the Town.

You can view the film here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=g6oq5-YkpdM>



Areas of Discussion:

Theme: Glenna asked for suggestions of themes that may be suitable for Battle. Please forward any further suggestions onto us.

Suggested Themes:

- Pollinators

Horticulture

- Places to highlight to judges and places to avoid
- Ideas for area that could be improved and transformed

Town Forum participants suggested a number of places that should be highlighted to the Judges, places to avoid and areas of improvement. It was agreed that this would determine the path BTC would take judges on to explore the town.

Ares of Battle to Highlight to Judges:

- The Abbey Green
- Almonry Gardens
- Cemetery
- Churchyard at St Marys Church – discussed whether we could put an area aside for wild flowers
- Emmanuel Centre - they have a new Gardening Team
- Mansers Shaw
- Battle Rec. – newly planted sensory gardens should be established by 2022

Areas for improvements and consideration:

- Market Square Car Park
- Market Square
- Mount Street Car Park
- Guild Shaw and path beside the Cricket pitch
- High Street
- Allotments
- Twitten between the High Street and Mount Street car park

Areas to Avoid:

- Park Lane – due to Japanese Knotweed growing in the hedges
- Market Square – unless improvements can be made as above

Community Participation

- How do we enthuse the parish?
- Ideas for possible entrants into It's your Neighbourhood

Town Forum participants suggested competitions as the key way to engage the community.

It was suggested that on the day the Community Singers playing on the band stand or a plant sale to make Market Square more inviting.

A community planter was suggested, different organisations could manage the planting of this each year. The gunpowder mortar by the cricket nets was suggested - this would be enhanced with an information board about the mortar.

Involvement of schools and pre-schools

- Suggested pre-schools could be involved in It's your Neighbourhood.
- Primary Schools in planting areas and promoting environmental issues.
- Secondary schools could be involved with artwork following the theme. These could be put in empty shop windows to have a continuous theme throughout the town.

If it would be of help, the opportunity to create raised beds for Saxon Wood Care Home to assist residents to take part in gardening activities was discussed. Could the Scouts potentially assist with preparing the land or put this out on social media to request help from the local community?

Competitions could be promoted by Town Council and the local community.

Environment

- What can we do to express our desire to care for the environment?
- Can your organisation help in any way to care for the environment?

The Town Forum participants suggested Calbec Hill as an area to be left as Wild Flower Meadow for the community.

The prospect of Bee Hives within the local community was also discussed, however there are issues with honey bees competing with wild bees for pollination and health and safety issues with this. Bee hives are already situated at Battle Abbey which could be emphasised.

Primary schools could be involved in promoting environmental issue.

The Keep Britain Tidy Campaign could be focused on and we could do litter picking to not only keep the area clean for judging but hold them on a regular basis.

Moving Forward together:

- What could your organisation do, either on its own or to support other organisations?

The Town Forum participants agreed to look at ways in which their organisations could actively participate or involve others.

Theme suggestions would be welcomed.

The group acknowledged that plans would have to be put in place soon to enable organisations, plants and plans to develop in time for a 2022 competition.

It was agreed that the group would meet again to discuss moving plans forward.