

BEST KEPT VILLAGE COMPETITION 2014 - JUDGES' COMMENTS GNOSALL

BKV awareness was achieved through BKV flyers to every household, articles in the Gnosall Parish News, liaison with a number of village groups, "Kitchener" posters and items on the BKV noticeboards. There were plenty of BKV posters on noticeboards around the village (including all shop windows in High Street) and "special" BKV posters and banners. There was also an excellent BKV calendar and walks booklet.

There were two excellent displays of children's posters at the bottom of High Street and at the Wharf Road shops in Gnosall Heath. Well done!

All noticeboards were in good condition, but the BKV board at the Memorial Hall will soon need a coat of paint. Notices were displayed neatly.

There was a good range of up-to-date local information on parish business, local activities, BKV, dog fouling awareness, recycling etc.

The Methodist Church car park and surrounds were neat and tidy, with no litter. St Lawrence's churchyard was tidy with no litter and few weeds; the grass was neat but due for a cut, probably being done later that morning, (in May). The burial ground was being dealt with by a large team of workers in May, but it still looked very tidy.

The surrounds and car park at The Grosvenor Centre were very neat indeed. There was no litter at all, the grass was well mown and all the planting areas were free of weeds. The Memorial Hall car park and its edges were neat and tidy, with no litter or weeds of note. The Health Centre car park and surrounds were immaculate and the planting areas looked very good.

The play area, garden and car park of The Navigation were all very good. The surrounds, sitting/eating area and car park of The Boat were neat, tidy and litter-free. The Royal Oak car park, smoking/sitting area and play area were all neat – except for some cigarette ends in the smoking area. The surrounds of The Horns were quite tidy, but there were some cigarette ends at the rear and it generally lacked any sparkle.

Both telephone boxes were in excellent order both inside and out. The floor of the box in High Street had been painted green and it looked "great"!

All the bus shelters were in good condition, with no weeds or litter around and with very clean interiors. The re-painted red one looked particularly good.

All the seat and benches were in good condition and there were no weeds or litter around them.

There were a number of excellent timber planting features, e.g. at the corners of Newport Road/Wharf Road and Stafford Road & Sellman Street. Other features such as The Lock Up and the Village Pump could also be highlighted as features in the village.

The Acres open space looked in very good condition throughout the judging period, with well cut grass, mown paths, good signs and information boards and no litter. The large allotment area also looked very tidy and well used.

Verges and small open spaces were generally very good, some were due for a cut at the time of the May judging, but all were tidy – with no litter.

Other than one in Gnosall Heath, private gardens were very good indeed and showed that residents had responded to the “requirements” of BKV in this matter.

The equipment in the play area was in good condition and although the safety surfaces were not perfect, they were satisfactory. The surrounding grass area was tidy, but again plagued by mole activity!

The map had a good base and there was a good use of colour, good reference to BKV features in the key and on the map and it was laminated. There were, however, a few cases in which the map did not reflect what was shown on the entry form (eg the number of play areas and small open spaces), the open space opposite Barley Orchard is not shown at all; and the Lock Up and The Village Pump should be shown as village features. These are minor criticisms which are easily put right and the Gnosall map is now a very effective piece of work.

There was a small amount of litter in the hedge at the bottom of High Street and just a few bits elsewhere in May. There was some dog mess on the edge of The Acres close to Brookhouse Road (in May) and outside The Royal Oak (in June). Other than that the village looked very clean and tidy overall during the judging period. This was another remarkable achievement given the heavily trafficked main road through the village. There was clear evidence of community awareness and of involvement in BKV.

Gnosall achieved a very high standard across the board again and judges were impressed with the effort which had been put in (including the mobile litter picker seen twice during judging in May!). The Stafford area remains one of the closest fought areas in the whole of BKV and whilst the village did not quite reach the area finals, Gnosall should be very satisfied with what they have achieved in BKV terms. Congratulations on your Highly Commended in 2014, well done; and good luck in 2015!

John T Perry, MBE
Chairman, BKV Working Group

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