

BEST KEPT VILLAGE COMPETITION 2017 – JUDGES’ COMMENTS GNOSALL

Measures taken to publicise participation in BKV were sending a flyer to every household, articles in the Parish News and the village website and by publication of a BKV Calendar sponsored by local businesses. There were large BKV “Kitchener” boards at the Memorial Hall and in front of the Grosvenor Centre and there were BKV posters at the village entrances, on noticeboards and in shop windows.

There were two excellent displays of children’s posters at the bottom of High Street (over 130) and near to the Gnosall Heath shops (over 60). They were very well sited and the posters were very closely linked to the philosophy of BKV. “They were real eye-catchers and great publicity for BKV” (July judges). This was a really good effort, congratulations to all those who were involved.

All the noticeboards were in good condition, with neatly displayed notices and tidy surrounds. The BKV board was easy to see this year, as the surrounding vegetation had been trimmed back; but there could be some water penetration inside the board.

There was a very good spread of up to date local information, on Parish Council matters, recycling and dog fouling awareness, bulky refuse disposal and local events and organisations. There was a great deal about GFest in July.

St Lawrence’s churchyard was neat and tidy. The grass was well mown in the early months of judging, but it looked less good and certainly needed a cut in July. Paths were generally neat, there was no litter and the noticeboard and benches were good. The burial ground was very well maintained throughout the competition; the grass areas were very well mown, grave areas were tidy and the benches were good, with tidy surrounds. The surrounds and car park of the Methodist Church were neat and tidy overall, but the boundary along Willey Lane looked “rather unsightly” (July judges).

The car park and surrounds of the Memorial Hall were tidy enough, but there were a few bits of litter, weeds and dead leaves along the edges of the car park in particular in both May and June. Whilst the judges noted some litter in May, for the rest of the competition the car park, surrounds and planting areas at the Grosvenor Centre, Parish Office and St John HQ were excellent; there was no litter and all the planting areas were weed-free. The grass at the front of The Scout and Guide Centre was well mown, there was no litter and the area was enhanced by an interesting group of scarecrows! The car park, surrounds and planted areas at the Health Centre were just immaculate throughout.

The frontage of The George and Dragon was very tidy, with no cigarette ends at all! The rear of The Horns had been transformed into a good outdoor drinking and smoking area, with some attractive planting. There was just a bit of litter at the edge of the car park in June and quite a few cigarette ends along the frontage in both June and July. The car park, grass area and outdoor drinking areas at The Navigation were very tidy; and so were those at The Boat, the frontage of which was enhanced by some very attractive hanging baskets. The grass area, play area and car park at The Royal Oak were all very tidy; there was a very neatly maintained new covered smoking/drinking area; and a very neat and tidy recycling area. All the pubs were a credit to the village, they all looked inviting and had “done their bit for BKV” in Gnosall (June judges).

Both phone boxes were very clean inside and their surrounds were free from weeds and litter. Judges noted that the High Street box had been purchased from BT and that it would be converted into a book exchange village feature in due course.

All four bus shelters were in good condition. The one near The Acres had been painted, some were decorated with a flower motif and some had BKV and other posters and local information on display. They were all clean inside and there was no litter or weeds around them. Excellent all round.

All the seats and benches were in good condition, with tidy, weed and litter-free surrounds. A few were suffering from sustained "bird strikes" however!

There was a range of very good features in the village, including the Lock Up and information board, a variety of well-constructed planters with very well maintained planting, and a number of general information and map boards and a footpath map. The new village entrance sign on Stafford Road looked very impressive and judges were also impressed by the wonderful "scarecrow planting feature" created by the Rainbows opposite the Lock Up to celebrate 100 years of Guiding. This was a really good new feature and indicative of the involvement of a young village group in the wider picture of BKV. Well done.

The large open space at The Acres looked very good throughout the judging period, with its mixture of nicely mown grass paths, the conservation/summer meadow area and the repaired board walk. No litter or dog mess was seen.

All the verges were well mown and litter-free. All the small open spaces throughout the village (e.g. off Manor Road, Brookhouse Lane, Sellman Street, etc.) were in excellent condition, with no litter or dog mess. They looked particularly good in June, when they had all just been mown!

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

The children's play equipment and safety surfaces in the area off Brookhouse Road were in good order, there was no litter and the mole problem seemed to have been resolved!

The new map was excellent. The base was clear, there was a good range of coloured symbols and BKV items to be judged were shown accurately. It was easy to follow and a pleasure to use.

Very little litter was seen in the village throughout the judging period (except where noted above); and no dog mess. This was an excellent effort, given the volume of traffic which passes through the village every day; and a tribute to the litter picking team of the BKB group! The High Street looked very good, with the new bunting. There was clear evidence of significant community awareness of and involvement in BKV, illustrated by the work being done on the canal towpath, the new village sign, plans for the former phone box and the number of well-informed residents and litter pickers which the judges saw during their visits – as well as GFest!

"It was a pleasure to visit Gnosall" (June and July judges). "The village buzzes with BKV and there seems to be a real pride in the village" (June judges). The effort which has been put in over the last few years has seen a real improvement across all aspects of BKV in Gnosall. This year the sustained hard work which was put in before and during the competition has been rewarded by First Place in the Large Village Category in the Stafford Area and the Best Large Village in the whole of Staffordshire in 2017. Congratulations and good luck next year.

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