



## SIXTY YEARS OF ENCOURAGING COMMUNITY GROUPS TO ENHANCE THEIR LOCAL ENVIRONMENT BY GARDENING TOGETHER

**EMBARGOED UNTIL 1500 HRS ON WEDNESDAY 18<sup>TH</sup> SEPTEMBER 2024**

Communities from across the North East came together on Wednesday 18<sup>th</sup> September at 'The Fed', Gateshead to recognise and celebrate all that they have collectively achieved in improving and transforming local environments across the whole of the region as part of this year's Northumbria in Bloom competition.

The competition, now in its 60th year, is all about encouraging local communities to improve their area through community gardening and sound environmental practises. It is part of the UK wide Britain in Bloom campaign run by the Royal Horticultural Society (RHS).

Representatives from entrants across the region were at the event to receive their awards. Robert Germany, Chairman of Northumbria in Bloom said: ***“When people think of Northumbria in Bloom they often assume that it’s all about hanging baskets and the municipal flower displays on roundabouts. However the reality couldn’t be further from the truth. This means that ‘in bloom’ communities tackle everything from litter, graffiti and mitigating anti-social behaviour through to conservation, biodiversity and improving horticultural standards, and that’s not to mention the positive impact on health & wellbeing, sense of place, community spirit and civic pride. Many of our groups are also using Bloom to help to mitigate some of the effects of climate change through planet friendly gardening. It is wonderful to see all the excellent work that communities are doing to protect and enhance their local environments. These Awards are all about recognising and celebrating this work and all that our communities have collectively achieved in enhancing the overall environment of the North East in 2024”.***

**-ENDS-**

## Notes to Editor:

- 1) Full list of all Main & Special Awards and Results attached.
- 2) Northumbria in Bloom is a registered north east regional charity run entirely by a board of volunteer trustees and judges / assessors. We receive no direct government support or funding.
- 3) Northumbria in Bloom was one of the seven founder regions of Britain in Bloom in 1964. Through the Britain in Bloom Federation we have an association with the Royal Horticultural Society (RHS).
- 4) Northumbria in Bloom runs a campaign every year to recognise, encourage and reward community groups who work together to transform their village, town or city through gardening, environmental awareness and community support.
- 5) Our region covers all of Northumberland, Tyne and Wear, County Durham and Tees Valley.
- 6) We organise the competition into classes by size of community, from Small Village to Large City. Urban Communities and Coastal Communities have classes of their own.
- 7) Any group can enter – many are entirely volunteer-run, others are in partnership with their Local Authority. All of them see the benefits that horticulture and community support bring to everyone.
- 8) Communities that participate in Northumbria in Bloom benefit in a variety of ways but the most common benefits are:
  - Cleaner and greener surroundings
  - Creating a sense of community through improvement of public spaces and positive interaction between community members
  - An increase in civic pride and sense of community empowerment by engaging people in the improvement of their own community
  - Safer environments for the enjoyment of local people
  - Long term improvement for the environment by addressing issues such as sustainability, resource management, conservation, litter, graffiti etc.
  - Reduction in anti-social behaviour
  - Positive effect on the local economy such as increased commercial enterprise and increased tourism
  - Regeneration of run down and/or disadvantaged areas
- 9) For further information on Northumbria in Bloom please see our website:  
[www.northumbriainbloom.com](http://www.northumbriainbloom.com)

**Media Contact - Andrew Jackson; Mobile Telephone: 07946 079351**  
**Email: [jacksonandrew1967@gmail.com](mailto:jacksonandrew1967@gmail.com)**



**SIXTY YEARS OF ENCOURAGING COMMUNITY GROUPS TO ENHANCE  
THEIR LOCAL ENVIRONMENT BY GARDENING TOGETHER**

## **NORTHUMBRIA IN BLOOM 2024 AWARDS AND FULL RESULTS**

**EMBARGOED UNTIL 1500 HRS ON WEDNESDAY 18<sup>th</sup> SEPTEMBER 2024**

### **BEST OVERALL ENTRY**

The Percy Boydell Award

#### **ALNWICK**

“The Alnwick in Bloom team really understands what works for their town, its residents and their visitors. There is true year-round interest in the planting schemes and the artwork, all maintained to a very high standard. Where there is seasonal planting, the designs are all themed and are different every year. The hanging baskets all use the same plants and colours, lending a pleasing uniformity to the eye. There are numerous examples of edible planting and passers-by are encouraged to pick and eat the produce as it ripens. There are very strong community links, with volunteers, local schoolchildren and The Alnwick Garden all working together to produce a stunning entry!”

### **MOST IMPROVED ENTRY**

The Whickham Award

#### **BISHOP AUCKLAND**

“Bishop Auckland in Bloom has had a difficult few years recently but their determination to succeed has really borne fruit this year. The partnerships they have forged have resulted in great improvements in the overall standard of horticulture and their community networks are impressive. The entry has always had a strong environmental focus and the town now is a delight to behold. The judges visited many new projects as well as more established areas, and there are numerous plans for the future - they are going from strength to strength!”

## **BEST ENTRY IN SPRING**

### **DARLINGTON**

“The team is to be commended for their year round endeavour, bringing far-reaching benefits to the town. The whole town is well cared-for and is testament to the partnership between the local authority and the large number of volunteers. The Yards are a welcoming attraction in the centre of town and the parks are exemplary in their mix of perennial planting and seasonal colour.. Special mention must be made of the many trees throughout the entry which are maintained with exceptional skill and with superb results!”

## **JUDGES' DISCRETIONARY AWARD**

### **SOUTHWICK**

“The Southwick team made a huge effort to highlight and celebrate the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Northumbria in Bloom. There were posters by the café, a beautifully decorated redundant phone box and many members of the community, old and young, had joined in painting stones with motifs depicting flora and fauna, red poppies and union flags to create a colourful and innovative scheme which decorated the Collieries and Shipyards workers Memorial Stone and the Southwick Green Remembrance Gardens.”

## **COUNTY DURHAM & DARLINGTON COMMUNITY REPARATION SCHEME**

**Office of the Durham Police and Crime Commissioner.**

“We all know how important a sense of civic pride in our local neighbourhoods is. A lack of such often leads to anti-social behaviour and nuisance. This year an initiative funded by the Office of the Durham Police and Crime Commissioner saw the planting of 60,000 bulbs in 34 anti-social behaviour hotspots across County Durham & Darlington in an effort to build pride in the local community and deter crime and nuisance behaviour. The planting was carried out by people who have offended and were subject to Community Payback. This is part of a programme of reparative activity which encourages the offenders to give back to their communities and make amends for their behaviour. The judges were impressed that the scheme not only supported the rehabilitation of people who have offended but also helps to discourage and prevent further unwanted behaviour in these areas; as well as providing wonderful floral displays to enhance and improve the quality of life in communities in so many different ways.”

Please note:

**Gold** – outstanding, **Silver Gilt** – very good, **Silver** – good, **Bronze** – average, **Merit** – Fair

## **SMALL VILLAGES**

Winner **COWPEN BEWLEY**

“Cowpen Bewley is a thriving community, fully committed to improving the ecology of the area through their own initiatives and through seeking expert advice where necessary. The village is neat, tidy and colourful and a haven for birds, insects and hedgehogs. Trees are all labelled and interesting new varieties are being planted.”

**Cowpen Bewley – Gold**

## **VILLAGES**

Winner **WASHINGTON VILLAGE**

“This year Washington in Bloom have celebrated the sixtieth anniversaries of Washington new town, Britain in Bloom and Northumbria in Bloom. The village was festooned in 60’s bunting and banners to acknowledge the celebrations with the group being dressed in wonderful sixties costumes. They have also adopted the Britain in Bloom milestone theme of friendship, for which they excel.”

Brancepeth – Silver Gilt

Greatham – Silver Gilt

**Washington Village – Gold**

## **LARGE VILLAGES**

Winner **HOLYWELL**

“The Holywell team as a whole should be commended for their enthusiasm and hard work. Mention should be made of their close cooperation with the staff from the local authority who try hard to complement the group’s efforts in hard economic times. The result is a thriving group that does so much for its community.”

**Holywell – Silver Gilt**

## **SMALL TOWNS**

Winner **GREATER WILLINGTON PARISH**

“Willington is a joy to visit as it is a warm, generous community that is trying very hard to improve its environment. It covers a very large area and maintaining the environment is challenging. Great strides have been taken to turn it from a mining area to an area which is now attractive to visitors looking at the roman roads, or walking and cycling along disused railway tracks. Colourful beds and wildlife areas are found alongside local sculptures and sign boards explaining their heritage.”

Settlements in DCC’s Annfield Plain Electoral Division - Bronze

**Greater Willington Parish – Silver Gilt**

Middleton St. George - Silver

## **TOWNS**

Winner **ALNWICK**

“Alnwick has a population of just 9,000 but the tourists visiting the historic town increase the footfall to 1.5million per year and, as such, the town council and Alnwick in Bloom volunteers have their work cut out to keep the town, with its lovely, historic and listed buildings, looking smart with thoughtful planting in containers and beds. Street furniture is well-positioned and some benches are bespoke and echo the wrought iron gates and artwork of Alnwick Garden. It is no surprise that the Alnwick Civic Society has recognised Alnwick in Bloom’s contribution to the town. For a town with very few and quite small green public spaces, the area does not feel hemmed in and there are plenty of seats and resting places for the public to utilize”.

**Alnwick - Gold**

## **LARGE TOWNS**

Winner **BISHOP AUCKLAND**

“Bishop Auckland has some outstanding areas of horticulture and community involvement. The recently completed Walled Garden and Castle Gardens at Auckland Castle are considerable achievements which will have international appeal and are sure to get even better as they mature. Kynren is also a fantastic example of working with nature to produce an exceptional landscape and a very popular tourism destination. The town is well presented and clean and is a credit to the whole community.”

**Bishop Auckland – Silver Gilt**

Chester-le-Street – Silver  
Cramlington – Silver Gilt  
Stanley – Silver Gilt

### **SMALL CITY**

Winner – **DURHAM**

“Durham has the benefit of huge areas of woodland, parks, university grounds, cathedral precinct and riverside walks. An awareness of their importance to the city is clear from the care and thought that goes into their maintenance. A careful balance is reached to cater for the needs of residents and visitors, while at the same time considering the environmental impact of this work.”

**Durham - Gold**

### **URBAN COMMUNITY**

Winner **BELMONT PARISH**

“Belmont is clean and green, with sports facilities, allotments, shopping centres, businesses and pubs and the Scrambles to walk in. For an urban area Belmont has a lot of grass and planted up areas with shrubs and perennial plants in smaller spaces, making good use of very colourful bedding plants. The friends groups and all the volunteers are a credit to Belmont.”

**Belmont Parish – Silver Gilt**

Southwick – Silver

### **COASTAL RESORT**

Winner **SEAHAM**

“Seaham is a well cared for vibrant town with its many visitors and residents enjoying the diverse shops and cafes, along the seafront and marina. The many events on Terrace Green are eagerly awaited, the latest being the European football finals which was shown on a large screen with hundreds of people enjoying the wonderful friendly atmosphere.”

**Seaham – Silver Gilt**

### **CITY CENTRE**

Winner **DARLINGTON**

“The Local Authority is working hard to create a vibrant and welcoming town centre and the Bloom effort plays an important part in achieving this. The role of the community, who volunteer in such significant numbers, cannot be underestimated. Darlington Town Centre is fast becoming an attractive destination and the Bloom team play a large part in creating a pleasant environment for visitors, commuters and residents.”

**Darlington – Gold**

## **SPECIAL CATEGORY AWARDS**

**Community Champions**

*For a truly outstanding contribution over several years by individuals, whether salaried or volunteer, in support of Northumbria in Bloom.*

### **Des Consitt, Seaham in Bloom**

“Des Consitt has been a consistent supporter of Seaham in Bloom over the years through his work at the Greenspace community allotment which regularly enters the competition and has enchanted many different teams of judges over the years. It is always a “high point” on the judging tour. He and his team have developed an ecofriendly green oasis on a patch of land that was for many years redundant and blighted by asbestos and invasive weeds. Recent arson attacks and personal attacks have only made them more determined to succeed. Des has also been actively involved in the creation of the innovative Dawdon Park Wildlife Garden. This beautiful area will only improve with time and is a credit to Des and Alison who have worked tirelessly to create it. Both of these environmentally friendly projects are widely used by groups in Seaham and are an important asset to the town and Seaham in Bloom’s entry.”

### **Nigel Bryson, Bishop Auckland in Bloom**

“Nigel has been the secretary of Bishop Auckland in Bloom since its inception 8 years ago and has supported them undeterred throughout that time. He has used his marketing skills not only to promote the Bloom group and its activities, but also to raise substantial sponsorship in support the group’s activities. He authors and produces the Judges Portfolio and the judging day itineraries and does all the administrative work involved in running the Bloom group. He established the awarding of local ‘discretionary awards’ which the Bishop Auckland in Bloom group make to those individuals, organisations and businesses who have supported the town’s In Bloom campaign. Nigel is quite simply ‘the glue’ that holds Bishop Auckland in Bloom together. Without his dedication and passion Bloom would not be where it is today as a group that is recognised as a major contributor to the regeneration and promotion of Bishop Auckland.”

### **Best Business and Out of Town Retail Park**

#### **Winner QUORUM PARK, NORTH TYNESIDE**

“Quorum Business Park in North Tyneside is a large urban greenspace incorporating a wide range of medium to large sized modern business units. Throughout the park the formal, manicured look and the more informal look for the encouragement of biodiversity are not mutually exclusive on separate individual sites but both maintenance styles are successfully blended together on the same sites and boulevards creating a very pleasant and attractive overall environment for those who work on the park to enjoy in terms of the health, wellbeing and contact with nature. Their motto is: “This year’s caterpillars are next year’s butterflies”!

#### **Quorum Park – Gold**

The Greenhouse, Stanley – Gold

Wynyard Business Park – Gold

### **Schools**

#### **Winner DURHAM GILESGATE PRIMARY SCHOOL, BELMONT**

“The Durham Gilesgate Primary School allotment should be the blueprint for all schools. Beautifully laid out raised beds, trained fruit trees, a greenhouse, pond and story telling area add to the magic of growing and experiencing the highs and lows of nature and weather that the children will hopefully remember, and benefit from, for years to come.”

#### **Durham Gilesgate Primary School – Gold**

### **Best Care/Residential/Convalescent Home, Hospice or Day Centre**

#### **Winner ST. CUTHBERT’S HOSPICE, DURHAM**

“St Cuthbert’s Hospice has gardens expertly maintained by a fantastic team of volunteers. There is a superb productive garden and several other areas providing opportunities for rest and quiet

contemplation for people at difficult times. The people of Durham are fortunate to have such a facility available.”

Lord Gort Close, Southwick – Silver  
Pottergate Centre, Alnwick - Gold  
**St. Cuthbert's Hospice, Durham - Gold**

### **Best Religious Establishment**

Winner **ST. CUTHBERT'S RC CHURCH GROUNDS, CHESTER LE STREET**

In St Cuthbert's churchyard colour, form and layout create inviting spaces for quiet contemplation in this well maintained and thought-out garden. Various themed areas offer a selection of visual and sensory experiences. The planting is beautifully maintained and encourages people as well as wildlife to enjoy the wide range of flora. This garden is a sensitive and natural extension to the church”.

Alnwick Cemetery - Gold  
Belmont Cemetery - Gold  
Durham Cathedral - Gold  
St. Brandon's, Brancepeth - Gold  
**St. Cuthbert's RC Church Grounds, Chester le Street - Gold**  
The Atisha Centre, Darlington - Silver Gilt

### **Best Small Commercial Premises**

Winner **JUST FOR WOMEN CENTRE, STANLEY**

“From a calm and peaceful quiet corner, perfect for reflection, to a vibrant and colourful space which is cheerful and welcoming, this garden has spaces with the intention to meet the various needs of those who visit. Overwhelmingly the atmosphere is caring and friendly and the extensive array of plants support this.”

Derwent Funeral Services, Annfield Plain - Silver  
Green Bean Café, Southwick - Silver  
**Just for Women Centre, Stanley - Silver Gilt**

### **Best Large Commercial Premises**

Winner **ORD HOUSE COUNTRY PARK**

“Ord House Country Park is a beautifully maintained private park for lodges and caravans, many of which are occupied all year round. It is maintained by a team of 4 full time and 1 part time staff. There are numerous beds and borders containing shrubs, perennials and roses as well as many vibrant and colourful displays of annual bedding, all very well planned and designed. The many trees are monitored and, again, very well maintained. Any prunings are chipped and used as mulch or for paths. A lovely wildlife pond is a haven for toads, frogs and newts as well as insect life. There are compost heaps for all compostable vegetation, including from residents' own plots and rain water is collected as much as possible. The whole Park is immaculate and maintained to a very high standard and plantings are revised and altered each year as necessary.”

**Ord House Country Park – Gold**

### **Best Pub**

Winner **The John Bull, Alnwick**

“WOW! What a use of a quite a long, narrow area. There is room for about 8 people but the plants take centre stage. They are strong and vibrant, well maintained, and so well put together, with clever use of unusual planters. It was a privilege to visit.”

Blagdon Arms, Cramlington - Silver



Ord House Lounge, Bar and Grill - Gold  
Tapas Bar, Darlington - Silver Gilt  
**The John Bull, Alnwick - Gold**  
Three Horseshoes, Cowpen Bewley - Bronze

### **Best Hotel / Guest House**

Winner **THE COOKIE JAR, ALNWICK**

“The Cookie Jar, historically, was a nunnery and the new owners have used the blue and white colour scheme to reflect its former use. The window boxes to the front are very eye-catching and when you pass into the rear garden the colours are bright and distinct. Seating areas allow a dedicated and tranquil feel to enjoy the views and enjoy your meal. The lavender was in full bloom, also the mixture of containers with its assortment of perennials gives a structured feel to the landscape. We hope your proposed expansion will encourage more visitors to your establishment and encompass its heritage. A pleasure to visit.”

Lumley Castle Hotel, Chester le Street - Gold  
Ramside Hall Hotel, Belmont - Gold  
Seaham Hall and Spa - Gold  
South Causey Inn & Hotel, Stanley - Gold  
**The Cookie Jar, Alnwick - Gold**

### **Best Conservation**

Winner **FRIENDS OF VALLEY PARK, CRAMLINGTON**

“This 52 acre site is enthusiastically looked after by a group of up to 60 volunteers. They maintain the meadow, woodland and newly created pond for the benefit of the entire local community - local residents are encouraged to pick the ripe fruit in the orchard. It has recently been awarded the Green Flag for its Community Involvement - a recent collaboration saw school children release butterflies which they had nurtured at school from caterpillars! This is a much loved asset to the residents, Cramlington in general and of course the local wildlife!”

Belmont Scrambles - Gold  
East Ord Nature Walk - Gold  
**Friends of Valley Park, Cramlington - Gold**  
Greenscape Dawdon Park Wildlife Garden, Seaham - Gold  
The Holy Trinity Church Graveyard Volunteer Group, Washington Village - Gold  
Just Let Your Soul Grow, Southwick - Silver Gilt  
Kynren, Bishop Auckland - Gold  
SSSi Site Annfield Plain, Stanley - Gold

### **Best Bus/Metro/Railway Station**

Winner **FRIENDS OF ALNMOUTH STATION**

“The Friends of Alnmouth Railway Station are well organised and the numerous large tubs lining the platforms are a colourful and welcome sight. The planting is carefully chosen and the colour schemes are delightful. The hanging baskets on the station building look very attractive too.”

**Friends of Alnmouth Station - Gold**

### **Best Park**

Winner **WHARTON PARK, DURHAM**

“Wharton Park is a peaceful haven on the very edge of the busy city centre. It continues to provide the people of Durham with a venue for a range of events over 100 years since opening. The Community Garden creates a floral oasis in the parkland setting. The Ranger team and volunteers deserve praise for caring for this well used outdoor recreational space”.

Alexandra Park, Cramlington - Silver Gilt

Riverside Park, Chester le Street - Silver  
Seaham Town Park - Gold  
South Park, Darlington - Gold  
Thompson Park, Southwick - Silver  
**Wharton Park, Durham - Gold**

### **Best Town Centre Retail Area / BIDs**

Winner **DURHAM BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT**

“Durham BID plays an important role in the Bloom entry; it provides significant financial support to ensure that the city’s commercial centre presents itself at its very best with a floral display that unusually is not limited to traditional annual planting. Particular mention must be made of the perennial hanging baskets within the Market Square which provide colour throughout the year.”

**Durham BID - Gold**

Manor Walks Shopping Centre, Cramlington - Gold  
Seaham Marina - Silver Gilt

### **Best Private Garden**

Winner **3, DINSDALE DRIVE, BELMONT**

“An immaculate garden filled with colourful and interesting perennials, shrubs and roses. The lawn has razor sharp edges and there is not a weed to be seen. It is lovely to see large swathes of plants in generous and shapely borders which invite the visitor to wander around many island beds and see something different at each turn. Brightly painted wooden features draw the eye in”.

**3 Dinsdale Drive, Belmont - Gold**

2 Greencroft Terrace, Greencroft - Bronze  
Castle Lodge Garden, Brancepeth - Silver  
George Turner, Swansfield Park Road, Alnwick - Gold  
Middletons in Bloom - Gold  
Otherston House, Stanley - Gold

### **Best Grounds of a Hospital, University or Public Building**

Winner **WILLOWBURN SPORTS & LEISURE CENTRE, ALNWICK**

“With a mix of shrubs, perennial plants, grasses and the elegant white birches all enhancing the building, it’s clean, bright and welcoming, with picnic tables and benches. The grasses and perennials give movement to the planting scheme, none of which is overbearing and all of it is very well done.”

University of Sunderland - Gold

**Willowburn Sports & Leisure Centre, Alnwick – Gold**

### **Best Sports Ground**

Winner **BRANCEPETH CASTLE GOLF CLUB**

“The team of staff and volunteers at Brancepeth Castle Golf Club have a huge area to cover but despite this keep it maintained to a high standard. The work to uncover and restore the steps and waterside area has been intensive but new plantings are establishing well. The more established planting near the clubhouse is well designed and planted with a good range of foliage shapes and colours as well as bursts of colour from perennials”.

**Brancepeth Castle Golf Club - Gold**

Anne Welfare Bowling Club, Cramlington - Silver Gilt

### **Best Residential Community**

Winner **ROBERT ADAM COURT, ALNWICK**

“The car park at Robert Adam Court is filled with flowering shrubs which is a welcoming sight for visitors and residents alike. The gardens at the back of the house are looked after by some of the residents and there is a good mixture of flowering shrubs, perennials, annuals and a few vegetables. There is a sunny seating area at the back of the building and some of the ground floor flats have doors to the garden where the owners tend to their own containers. The whole is a very uplifting scene and is obviously enjoyed by all the residents.”

Liberty Green Rockery and Box Bed, Washington Village - Silver Gilt

Middletons in Bloom - Gold

Quaker Lane, Darlington - Gold

**Robert Adam Court, Alnwick - Gold**

The Forge, Brancepeth - Bronze

Whitehouse Farm, Greatham - Gold

### **Best Allotments**

Winner **GREENSCAPE COMMUNITY GARDEN, SEAHAM**

“Greenscape Community Garden is a wonderful community space which grows a wide range of fruit, veg and cut flowers. Produce includes cherries, apples, blackcurrants, a wide range of vegetables and Dahlias, Delphiniums and Carnations, all grown from seed. A raised wildlife pond attracts toads and lots of insects to the garden which all help with the eco system and pest control. The garden is also a great educational space and is used by schools, Scout and Beaver groups. The whole garden is maintained to a very high standard with all the structures, greenhouses, tunnels and raised beds in good condition and everywhere neat and tidy”.

Belmont Allotments - Gold

**Greenscape Community Garden, Seaham - Gold**

Middletons in Bloom - Gold

Roots and Shoots, Alnwick Garden - Gold

Saltburn Allotments Association - Gold

St. Margaret's Allotments, Durham - Gold

The Allotments, Brancepeth - Gold

### **Best Tourist or Visitor Attraction, or Country Estate**

Winner **THE ALNWICK GARDEN**

“The internationally renowned Alnwick Garden has put Northumberland firmly on the map. There is something to do here for all ages and abilities. It is no wonder visitors keep going back to see it again and again - there is always something new to see or do. It is a marvel of engineering, plantsmanship and entertainment.”

Auckland Castle Grounds, Bishop Auckland - Gold

Durham University Botanic Garden - Gold

Northumberlandia, Cramlington - Silver Gilt

Tanfield Railway, Stanley - Silver Gilt

**The Alnwick Garden - Gold**

Walled Garden, Auckland Castle, Bishop Auckland - Gold

Washington Old Hall - Gold

**-ENDS-**