



**RHS Britain in Bloom**  
**UK Finals Marking Sheet 2017**

<b>Name of entry: Belper</b>	<b>Judging Date: 1 August 2017</b>
<b>Category: Large Town</b>	<b>Judges: Kim Parish and Nigel Bishop</b>

Horticultural Achievement	Silver Gilt
Environmental Responsibility	Gold
Community Participation	Gold
Overall	Gold

Comments:

**Introduction** (*introductory remarks from the judges*):

The judges enjoyed an amazing welcome from the choir, singing 'We Can Grow Love (Britain In Bloom)' by Tracey Wilkinson and Rough Truffles and Chevin Singers. The words truly portray what the competition is all about.

This was followed by a great start to the tour with the presentation by Ann Pocklington and displays of the all-year-round activity at St John's Chapel, which was followed by an official welcome by your town crier, Terry Porter, at the Market Place.

The tour continued to this high standard and was well thought out.

The judges saw many memorable things during their time with you but what stood out continuously was the support and interaction between community groups. It was outstanding and the enthusiasm infectious!

Your use of a yearly theme works very well, and this year's water theme was very well executed, especially the waterwheel which was magnificent.

**SECTION A – Horticultural Achievement**

**Areas of Achievement:**

- Belper Town Council staff (Stuart Hopkinson and his two colleagues) have created a series of 'wows' through the Memorial Gardens with their water-themed plantings. The ideas, plant choice, and implementation, were outstanding.
- It is great to see a new initiative introduced each year at Field Lane bed, which is then transferred to the Memorial Gardens, re-used and updated. The quality and execution of the water flowing over the wheel at Field Lane is excellent and will have residents and visitors

talking for a long time. The only problem you are going to have is providing something to equal it!

- The business support in Belper is outstanding with such a large take up of the baskets, 193 out of 220, and raising an impressive income. This is extremely hard to achieve and the judges congratulate you on it.
- There are many strong elements of this section that the judges will remember: the striking flower towers, colourful baskets, and Strutts Community rainwater and flower gardens.

#### **Areas for Development:**

- The judges saw examples of sustainable planting at the Memorial Gardens, River Gardens, Cottage Project garden, and Flying Geese roundabout. The judges know you have some plans for the Memorial Gardens but the plant selection was not of the same high standard as the other planting we saw. The use of perennials and shrubs can still create wows, and it would be good to see these areas upgraded a little. The judges know you have plans in hand for The Memorial Garden but it would be advisable to look at the other areas too.
- The judges visited two parks in Belper. The judges realise the River Gardens are under development with the café project but the horticulture was not quite to the same standard as we saw at the Memorial Gardens. The judges would suggest just going to one of the parks as part of the tour. The other park could just be shown in the portfolio instead or as part of your displays. This will give you a little more time on the tour. The judges appreciate the financial pressures local authorities are under, but could a grant help fund some improvements?
- It would be helpful to see more evidence on your resident's garden.

### **SECTION B – Environmental Responsibility**

#### **Areas of Achievement:**

- This is a very strong area for Belper and the judges were particularly impressed at the work by local historian Adrian Farmer in sharing the amazing heritage of your town through the regular walks. The judges saw examples of your heritage throughout the tour through interpretation boards, the view of the First World War poppy beds that is visible from almost everywhere in the town and the poetry trail.

#### **Areas for Development:**

- There is very little to say here; there was a tiny amount of detritus and the view area opposite the Memory Park wasn't to the same high standard as elsewhere. Although the judges realise they aren't your responsibility, the telephone box and postboxes would benefit from some care.

### **SECTION C – Community Participation**

#### **Areas of Achievement:**

- This is an outstanding section for you. The work of Liz Page and Belper Town Council together with John Nelson and the whole Bloom team, together with numerous groups and individuals, is outstanding. The judges were impressed at the range of community

participation, involvement by community groups throughout the year and the funding/sponsorship.

- The judges met so many individuals and groups that are such important elements to Belper's entry, they have named a few individuals and apologise that they cannot name everyone. It is great to see all your activities on social media and the local media, and captured forever by Jim Bell, providing a valuable record.
- Kathy Fairweather's open garden event is a great community fundraiser, raising £6k for Belper organisations.
- The judges appreciate our tour is made during the school holiday, but it was great to meet Libby, the children in the choir and see the work of the school through the DVD.
- It is extremely hard to get television coverage, and the cameraman followed us throughout the tour. This will only help publicise your work and the positive effects of Bloom.

**Areas for Development:**

- A minor criticism but the tour felt a little rushed. The judges realise that it is difficult to fit everything into the time available but we felt pressure to keep moving and this made it difficult to get what we needed from the tour (having photographs to be able to go back to, make notes and talk to people). The judges would suggest tweaking the tour very slightly.
- The judges would like to have learnt a little more about any future projects, perhaps in your presentation or portfolio.

