



NORTHUMBRIA

HANDBOOK FOR ENTRANTS 2020

Reg charity no 1123251

YOUR CHECKLIST FOR JUDGES' TOURS

These are the things the judges would find helpful on the day:

- Printed itinerary and route map.
- Portfolio (either printed or via email, before the tour)
- List of proposed Special awards (max 10)
- List of proposed IYN's

Welcome to Northumbria in Bloom 2020

We have put together this Handbook to give you an overview of the competitions and campaigns run by **Northumbria in Bloom**.

The **Main Competition** comprises Spring and Summer judging of city, town, village, urban community, city centre and coastal resort categories, and the results are announced at the **Awards Ceremony in September** to which every entrant is invited to send representatives.

The judging teams are made up of two to three people (a combination of experienced and trainee judges). Depending on the size of the entry, the judging tour can take anything from one to four hours.

The three sections that the judges are looking at are **Horticultural Achievement, worth 40% of the marks, Environmental Responsibility, worth 30%, and Community Participation, also 30%**. The new marking sheet and up to date judging criteria will be available on the website soon.

Within the main competition there are several Special Award categories. You may enter up to 10 Specials from any of the categories, but only 1 from each category. Your Specials must be agreed with your judging team by 31st May. More details can be found on pages 6 and 7. The judging criteria for the Specials are under review to bring them up to date and make them more relevant - more information will be available before we launch at the 2020 Spring Meeting.

The Royal Horticultural Society It's Your Neighbourhood (IYN) campaign is non-competitive and free to enter. This is assessed by Northumbria in Bloom volunteers for the RHS. You may have IYN groups that you would like to be assessed during the summer, and these need to be registered by the middle of June. Full details of the IYN campaign are on page 9.

The 2020 Competition will be launched at the Spring Meeting in March. All Entrants will be invited to attend what we hope will be an interesting and informative event with a mixture of talks, presentations and workshops. Please see the back cover of this handbook for the 2020 timetable.

We hope you find this booklet useful. If you want more help or advice please phone or email any of the contacts at the front of the book, or visit our website.

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Categories & Length of Tours

VILLAGES

Small Village	A1	1 hour
Village	A2	1 hour
Large Village	A3	2 hours

TOWNS

Small Town	B1	2 hours
Town	B2	2 hours 30 minutes
Large Town	B3	3 hours

CITIES

Small City	C1	3 hours 30 minutes
City	C2	4 hours
Large City	C3	4 hours 30 minutes

URBAN COMMUNITY	D	2 hours 30 minutes
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COASTAL RESORT	E	2 hours 30 minutes
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CITY CENTRE	F	2 hours 30 minutes
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How to Enter

Who can enter?

Any Local Authority area (Metropolitan, District, Urban); any Parish Council or any 'In Bloom' group, formed with the aim of improving the appearance and environment of their village or town.

What can they enter?

An entry should be a clearly defined area, falling within one of the categories below:

Class A: Villages:	A1 Small Village	Electoral roll under 300
	A2 Village	Electoral roll 301 – 1,000
	A3 Large Village	Electoral roll 1,001 – 2,500
Class B: Towns:	B1 Small Town	Electoral roll 2,5001 – 6,000
	B2 Town	Electoral roll 6,001 – 12,000
	B3 Large Town	Electoral roll 12,001 – 35,000
Class C: Cities	C1 Small City	Electoral roll 35,001 – 100,000
	C2 City	Electoral roll 100,001 – 200,000
	C3 Large City	Electoral roll over 200,000
Class D: Urban Community		Electoral roll up to 25,000
Class E: Coastal Resort		Electoral roll up to 35,000

The class to be entered is determined by the electoral roll figure, **not** the population figure.

Class F: City Centre 1km radius from a point chosen by you

Can more than one entry be submitted by a council?

In many cases, a council area covers several categories – city, large and small towns, urban communities and large and small villages. There is no limit to the number of entries which may be submitted by any one council. A council may enter separately as well as individual entries from the parish and 'In Bloom' groups within its boundaries.

When do the judges visit?

Judges and entrants arrange mutually convenient dates between themselves, to fall within the two judging periods in April and July.

How can entries be made?

By completing the entry form to be found under Main Competition on the website: www.northumbriainbloom.co.uk. Here you will find all information concerning closing dates, how to return the form and fees payable.

Still unsure?

We are very happy to answer any questions you may have, and to visit you if required. In the first instance, please contact Jo Wood (Entries Co-ordinator) 01287 660696 joannamfwood@gmail.com or Val Giles (Secretary) 01434 240462 vlagiles1@hotmail.com

Route Planning & Looking After Your Judges

- Enjoy the experience; this is your time to show off your community!
- Make sure your meeting point is easy to find - most of the judges will be new to your community. Perhaps put up some posters - it's also good publicity!
- Note the judging time allowed for the category you are competing in (see NiB Website). You may add 15 minutes for your Presentation.
- Special Awards – You can submit a maximum of ten nominations per entry. These **must** be discussed and agreed with your judges on their spring judging visit. You may allow up to 15 minutes per nomination as part of your allocated judging time.
- Review the marking sheet (available on www.northumbriainbloom.co.uk) and ensure that all aspects of the judging criteria are covered. Make sure that you organise your tour relative to how the marks are allocated.
- Plan the route and walk through it at the time that your judges will be visiting. Please try to keep to time - your judges may be visiting another entry on the same day. Allow some extra time for the unexpected!
- The judges will need to be accompanied throughout the tour. Please keep this to a maximum of four people at any one time, each of whom should be able to answer questions.
- Consider which other team members you will have at each stop to meet the judges. We enjoy meeting everyone involved.
- **Your entire tour route is subject to judging.** Avoid 'grot spots' - we all have them - but if you need to drive or walk past them have an explanation ready.
- Try to avoid repetition – one example is often enough.
- Schools – do not underestimate this important resource. If you are unable to get the children involved on the day make sure you demonstrate their involvement in other ways.
- An itinerary should be provided to the judges at the start of their tour to help them as they travel around your community.
- The judges will expect that your campaign has considered your entire community and not just the High Street or the Village Square.
- The inclusion of pay-on-entry gardens or attractions is acceptable on the tour. If such sites are shown to the judges they will be judged within the commercial section of the marking sheet.
- Ensure that you show the judges a balance of seasonal and perennial planting, new and mature projects.
- Allow time in your tour for comfort breaks - your judges may have travelled some distance to reach you. Also have some umbrellas ready on rainy days.
- A cup of tea or coffee and some light refreshment would be greatly appreciated by the judges at some point during their visit.
- Make sure the judges have good sight lines from any vehicle you use - smoked glass is difficult to see through.

Special Awards Guidance Notes

An entry for a Special Award may be considered if it is situated within an entry in the Main competition. If it does not fall within a Main entry, then it may instead be suitable for an It's Your Neighbourhood (IYN) award, or as a Stand Alone Special.

Before deciding on your entries for a Special Award, please consider the following:

1. All Special Award entries **must** be agreed with your judges by **31 May**, following discussions at the Spring visit. Judges may advise that an entry is not suitable or would benefit from additional time to mature. You might wish to use the form on page 7 to list your proposed Special Award entries.
2. Entries are limited to one per category, up to a maximum of **ten in total**. The categories are set out overleaf.
3. There is no fee for entering a Special Award, providing it is within a Main Entry. Entries will be assessed during the judges' visit in July, and will receive their awards at the main NiB Presentation in September. 15 minutes extra time may be added on to the judges' visit for each Special Award where required.
4. If the proposed entry is within a main NiB entry **and** fits the Special Award criteria, it would normally be entered as a Special, unless the maximum number set out in note 2 above has already been reached. In that case, consideration could be given to entering it for an It's Your Neighbourhood award. If the proposed entry does not fall within a Special Award category, then again it may be eligible for entry as an IYN.
5. With the exception of the Community Champions award, the balance of points emphasises horticultural achievement, worth 50% of the marks. There are two other criteria relevant to each Special category, which together make up the other 50%. The full list of the up to date judging criteria will be available on the website. It is **important** that you **check** to make sure that your Special fulfils the criteria.
6. No entry may be in both Special Awards and IYN unless a volunteer group has a specific area of responsibility within a wider entry, such as a community garden (the IYN) within a public park (the Special).
7. Bloom groups of Main entries may not be entered for special awards or IYN's.
8. Entrants should provide **one digital photograph** for each Special Award, in landscape format, for use during the power point presentation at the Awards Ceremony. Details of how to upload your photo can be found on page 12

Special Awards 2020 Categories & Criteria

1 Business Parks and Out-of-Town Retail Parks

This award is open to entry from all business parks in the region including those in localities which are not in the main Northumbria in Bloom competition. An entry form can be downloaded from the website.

2 Community Champions 2a, 19years and over; 2b, 18 years and under

For an outstanding contribution over several years by an individual, whether salaried or a volunteer, in support of Northumbria in Bloom. Nominations may be initiated by entrants (excluding the individual concerned) or judges, but it is the decision of the judging team as to whether the nominee is put forward for consideration of the award. If so, a written appreciation and an up-to-date photo of the nominated individual is required and should be submitted by the nominating entry to Jo Wood joannamfwood@gmail.com by 24 July. Individuals may receive the award only once, and nominations are limited to one per entry. Once submitted, nominations will be considered by the Trustees, and awards made at their discretion. **Awards will only be made to those individuals who have made a truly outstanding contribution over a sustained period**, and will be limited to a maximum of five for each calendar year.

3 Schools

For educational establishments (excluding colleges of further education and universities - see category 14).

4 Care/Residential/Convalescent Homes, Hospices and Day Centres

5 Religious Establishments

For grounds of places of worship, cemeteries and crematoria.

6 Commercial Premises 6a, Small; 6b, Large

Where a single business is carried out. Allocation between the two categories is at the discretion of the judges.

7 Pubs

Rear garden/beer garden may be included.

8 Hotels and Guest Houses

9 Conservation Projects

The conservation work should relate primarily to the natural environment and the majority of the site should be within the main entry boundary.

10 Bus/Metro/Railway Stations

Applies to platforms and **clearly defined** forecourts/station car parks.

11 Parks

Portfolios

This is your opportunity to showcase all that you do.

The portfolio is not judged; however it can be used to give valuable information to the judges prior to their arrival and the information it contains will be taken into account when your report is written. It is helpful to both you and the judges if you could indicate which category of the marking sheet the sections of your portfolio refer to.

It would be very useful if you could send your portfolio to your judges **two weeks before the summer judging date**. If you send it by email, please ensure that you have a hard copy to give to your judging team on the day of their visit.

Your portfolio provides a great opportunity to illustrate your campaign's year round activities and the things that you can't include on your tour. It does not need to be professionally designed or cost a lot of money; it's the content rather than the style that is important.

Please make it no more than 30 pages or sides of A4, but it doesn't have to be that long. Just make sure the information is relevant and helpful.

Content - these are **suggestions only**. It is entirely up to you what information you include:

- A quick introduction on your local campaign and your village / town / city.
- A copy of your diary of events showing year-round activities and projects.
- Use the portfolio to show the judges things you would like to include on the tour but can't due to time or other constraints.
- Names of key people involved and a list of sponsors / supporters.
- A quick insight into your future plans.
- Photos where you have them available, including displays and/or events from all the seasons e.g snowdrops and crocuses, autumn colour and berries, your Christmas social event!
- Record your volunteer hours. This can be important and help you to apply for grants or matched funding.
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Photographs

Your Responsibility!

Don't forget to upload **one** photo for your **Main** entry and **one** for **each Special** so that they can be displayed at the Awards Event in September. Full details of **what** we need and **when** are detailed on page 12 but you can take your photos at any time during the year - you choose when things are looking their best! You should also upload **one** photo for **each IYN**.

RHS 'It's Your Neighbourhood' (IYN) 2020

IYN is open to all volunteer groups in the Region, not just in areas entering the main Bloom competition. It is non-competitive, free to enter and aimed at smaller, community groups greening their local area, but not at individual gardeners. It could for example be a residents' group improving their street, a conservation group, or scouts or guides clearing scrub and planting bulbs.

IYN entries must be made via the Northumbria in Bloom website by **12th June**.

An Assessor will contact each group to arrange a visit between 1st July and 14th August to meet the volunteers, review their work and offer advice if appropriate.

For IYN entries which are within Bloom entry locations, it is important that, after discussions at the spring judging, entrants agree with NiB judges which groups will go forward for Special Awards and which will enter IYN.

www.northumbriainbloom.co.uk /IYN/information for entrants page provides the RHS IYN Information Pack and the assessment forms, explaining the scheme and the factors the Assessors will consider.

IYN's purpose is to acknowledge and celebrate volunteers' efforts in improving their environment, so assessments are approached positively, in a spirit of encouragement.

IYN's three Core Pillars of assessment are:

Community Participation	(40%)
Environmental Responsibility	(30%)
Gardening Achievement	(30%)

There are five levels of achievement:

Level 1	Establishing	0-35 points
Level 2	Improving	36-52 points
Level 3	Advancing	53-68 points
Level 4	Thriving	69-85 points
Level 5	Outstanding	86-100 points

At the Awards ceremony on 23rd September each entrant will receive an RHS certificate along with their assessment report.

NORTHUMBRIA IN BLOOM AWARD GUIDELINES

GOLD – Excellent

- An exceptionally high standard demonstrated throughout.
- A consistent approach which demonstrates both best practice and sustainable effort.
- Meets **all** of the judging criteria and objectives of the competition and scores very highly in **each section** of the judging criteria.

SILVER GILT – Very Good

- A high standard entry which meets the judging criteria and objectives of the competition, including sections of exceptionally high standard.
- Generally meets sustainable and quality thresholds, but these may not be entirely consistent throughout the area.
- Potential to be a Gold medal winner in the future.

SILVER - Good

- Considered to be an above-average entry which meets most of the judging criteria and objectives of the competition.
- The entry will include more than one section which demonstrates exceptionally high standards
- In particular, the entry will demonstrate good sustainable standards and the potential to progress to Silver-Gilt standard.

BRONZE - Satisfactory

- An average entry which meets most but not necessarily all of the judging criteria and objectives of the competition.
- The entry will include at least one section which demonstrates an exceptional standard.
- In general, the entry will meet acceptable sustainable standards and the potential to progress to Silver standard.

Hints and Tips to Increase your Marks

- **Your co-ordinating judge** will contact you initially to arrange the spring judging visit and will plan the summer judging dates with you on your spring visit. The spring visit is also the time to discuss your Specials.
- **Presentation** – you can include in your tour a presentation of an additional 15 minutes. This should focus on giving an overview of year round working, showing the judges the variety of activities you have been involved with. This can be an opportunity for your judges to meet volunteers who could not be included in the tour, and also view displays of areas that you were unable to visit due to time restrictions.
- **Sponsorship or benefits in kind** - think about what you need and how you might get it. Include evidence of all your sponsorship, benefits and fundraising in your **portfolio**.
- **Get the Press involved** to publicise your events and on judging day.
- **Your judges may take lots of photographs** but don't worry - this is perfectly normal! It's just to jog their memories when they come to write your report.
- The campaign concentrates on three core pillars – **Horticultural Achievement, Environmental Responsibility and Community Participation**. Look at the marking sheet on the website to see how the marks are allocated between these three core pillars and the individual sections of each. Try to include examples of every section in your tour or portfolio.
- Northumbria in Bloom is not just about spring and summer displays, it is about a **year-round programme of activity** to improve the local environment and get the community actively engaged. The judges will want to see evidence of your year round programme of work.
- If transport is required vehicles should allow fairly unrestricted views - smoked glass is unhelpful!
- **Plan for all weather conditions**. In hot weather bottles of water or other drinks are greatly appreciated.
- **On the Street** – street furniture, signage and art in the landscape are important parts of the environment so take a look at where they are positioned and what condition they are in - do they need to be smartened up?
- As well as the horticultural aspect the judges will be looking for evidence of **conservation and biodiversity, resource management** (composting, recycling, water conservation) and the management of **local heritage** (including natural heritage), so ensure that you address these issues to gain high marks.

Northumbria in Bloom is intended to be an enjoyable, positive experience. So get active, be proud of your community and encourage as many participants as possible to join in. Above all, have FUN!

Uploading Your Photos To The Website

1. The Northumbria in Bloom photo uploader can be found at www.nibphotouploader.co.uk
2. Select the competition from the dropdown box. Your choices are Main, Special and IYN.
3. This will give you a second dropdown box with a list of entry names.
4. Select your entry from this list. Please note: Entries are listed in alphabetical order of the Main Entry name e.g. 'Sedgefield' for a Main or 'Sedgefield - Ceddesfeld Gardens' for a Special. Please take care to select the correct entry name from the list. If you have any doubts about which is the correct one please email admin@northumbriainbloom.co.uk
5. A message will be displayed asking you to give your permission to Northumbria in Bloom to use your photo. If you are happy to do this, click the Accept button. If you are not happy about it, please email admin@northumbriainbloom.co.uk
6. You will then see a new screen asking you to choose which file to upload. Click the 'Choose File' button and navigate to the photo you have decided to use. Once you have selected your photo from your computer you will be returned to the previous screen where you can now click 'Upload'.

Key points to note are:

- a. All images must be uploaded before midnight on **1 September**
- b. Please limit the **file size** of any uploaded image to **3MB**. Please refer to the NiB photo uploader pages if you need assistance with resizing your image file. If you try to upload a photo larger than 3MB you may see an error message.
- c. All images must be in **landscape** format (the width is greater than the height). We will not be able to use any images which are in portrait format.
- d. Entrants can submit **one** photo for each **Main** entry and **one** for **each Special**. If you try to upload more than one you will see an error message. **One** photo also for each **IYN**.
- e. Allowable file types are .jpg, .jpeg, .gif, .png and .bmp.
- f. All photos **must** be uploaded using the photo uploader. Only in **exceptional circumstances** can we accept photos by any other means.

If you receive a message saying that you've already uploaded your photo but you know that you haven't, please email admin@northumbriainbloom.co.uk

Useful Contacts

Andrew Jackson
Chairman **07760 172142**
andrew.jackson@durham.gov.uk

Robert Germany
Treasurer **01434 682519/07443 005670**
robertgermany@hotmail.co.uk

Joanna Wood
Entries co-ordinator **01287 660696/07982 813597**
joannamfwood@gmail.com

Val Giles
Secretary **01434 240462**
valgiles1@hotmail.com

Peter Rodger
Website/photo uploads **07550 011001**
peter@anick.co.uk

Sabina Rose
IYN co-ordinator **01434 606290/07710 267525**
rosesinoakwood@onetel.com

Website address www.northumbriainbloom.co.uk

2020 TIMETABLE

Wednesday 11 March - NiB SPRING MEETING
(10.30am for 11.00)
Lancastrian Suite, Gateshead NE11 9JR

1-30 April **NiB SPRING JUDGING**

31 May **Special Awards Entry Deadline**

12 June **IYN Entry Deadline**

1-24 July **NiB SUMMER JUDGING**

1 July-14 Aug **RHS IYN ASSESSMENTS**

1 September **Photo Uploading Deadline**

23 September **NiB & IYN PRESENTATION OF**
Wednesday **AWARDS**
(10.00am for 10.30)
Lancastrian Suite, Gateshead NE11 9JR