



Bedlington in Bloom

2014



Going For Gold

Bedlington In Bloom 2014 Working Group

Chairman – Mr Hugh Kerr – resident

Sarah Askew – Bedlington Community Allotment

Mrs Brenda Dalton – resident

Mrs Bernadette Hall – resident

Councillor Paul Hedley – West Bedlington Town Council

Councillor Adam Hogg – West Bedlington Town Council

Mr Russell Hogg – Ridge Terrace Allotment Association

Mrs Lyn Horton – Leading Link

Mrs Merle Rewcastle – St Cuthbert's Church Bedlington

Councillor Malcolm Robinson – West Bedlington Town Council

Mrs Brenda Tonge – resident

Mrs Pam Towers – Chester Court Nursing Home

Steven Young - Admin Support West Bedlington Town Council



Introduction

West Bedlington Town Council has entered Northumbria in Bloom for a number of years, achieving Silver Medal awards in 2011, 2012 and 2013.

Bedlington In Bloom Working Group was formed in November 2013 with the aim of progressing West Bedlington Town Council's entry in the competition and to enhance and improve what we already believe to be a charming and friendly town.

The working group's stated aim is "Going for Gold" as we look to make the necessary improvements to our entry to secure a Gold Medal and generally make residents feel proud of their town and to be more environmentally aware of their surroundings.

Bedlington in Bloom – Going for Gold

- For the very first time West Bedlington Town Council undertook to offer its residents an active part in its Northumbria in Bloom entry. Expressions of interest were sought by the Council inviting all residents to join a working party. The invitation came via the Council's Town Plan questionnaire, distributed to all households in September 2013. These were then followed up with personal invites to those people who showed an interest to attend an inaugural meeting of the group in November 2013. Appendix 1. [C2]
- The first meeting of the residents lead group took place on Tuesday November 12th 2013. At that meeting Mr Hugh Kerr was elected as the group's chairman. [C1 C2]
- The group has a varied makeup with residents, representatives from the business and church communities, allotment associations as well as youth workers and Town Councillors. [C3]
- The group meets on a monthly basis (more often as judging times approach). [ALL C]
- The group reports back to West Bedlington Town Council on a monthly basis. Appendix 2 [ALL C]



Actions to Date

- An information leaflet (Appendix 3) was distributed to local businesses. This was followed up with personal approaches to all businesses inviting participation/sponsorship and sign up to the 2014 competition entry (Appendix 4) [C2]
- Posters were designed and printed for display in shops/Churches/businesses. A5 Hand-out versions were produced for distribution to residents and shoppers along the Front Street (Appendix 5) [C2]
- All local schools were contacted to encourage participation in horticultural projects (Appendix 6) [C2]
- A large banner was purchased and displayed prominently in the town centre to promote awareness and involvement [C2]
- Church communities were informed, and continue to be informed, via their magazines and circulars (Appendix 7) [C2 C3]
- West Bedlington Town Councils website has a page dedicated to the entry to keep the community informed [C2 C3]
- A Gardening Competition for residents and businesses has been agreed (Appendix 8 and 9) [C3]
- A Photographic competition of Spring Blooms has been agreed (Appendix 10 and 11) with photographs to be displayed in Bedlington Community Centre and St Cuthbert's Church. The competition has separate categories for children and adults [C3 C4]
- The Town Council and the Bedlington in Bloom working group have enlisted the help of a local university student "Robyn Myerscough" to take photographs of the floral displays and to help illustrate the work in progress of the group. All the photographs included in the portfolio have been taken by Robyn. [C2 C3 C4]
- Hanging baskets, railing planters, tubs, and tools for various initiatives have been purchased. [C3 C5]
- Procurement of reduced peat compost has been agreed by one of the towns Allotment Associations. [B2 C5]
- Youth Ambassadors planted cherry trees at the 20 acre field. [A1 B1 B5 C2 C3]
- All street furniture and public seats have been repainted. [B5]
- Letters have been delivered to vacant properties in the town asking the owners to contribute to the entry by improving the appearance of the vacant property. (Appendix 12) [B4]
- A "bag pack" @ Morrisons which included participation by school children and youth ambassadors took place to increase public awareness and raise additional funds. The event was very well received by shoppers and residents and received very positive feedback. [C2 C3 C5]
- Leading Link activities to date have included:
 - i) The planting of 300 trees in County Parks and conservation areas around the West Bedlington area. (20 Acres, Humford Woods, Attlee Park, Community Orchard, within schools).[A2] [A3] [A5] [B1] [C1]

[C2] [C3] [C4]

- ii) Working with several groups of young people, approximately 75 in total, revamping derelict bandstand at Attlee Park including planting 1,000 daffodils, enhancing the entrance with a mosaic and stone wall, extended the stage and placing mosaic stones, creating pathways and disabled access. Funding of £60,000 received from the Sita Trust as well as a further £6,000 from local County Councillors. [B5] [C1] [C2] [C3] [C4] [C5]
- iii) The Lodge Community Garden – designed and built by 40 x 16 – 17 year olds during the last summer holidays as part of the National Citizenship Service (NCS) for their social action project with a £10,000 Sita bid [A2] [A3] [C1] [C2] [C3] [C4] [C5]
- iv) Community Orchard – sponsored by 56 various members of the community from the Leader of Northumberland County Council to local resident – funded by Big Trees and planted by a group of young people from St Benet Biscop and Meadowdale Middle. [A2] [A3] [B1] [C1] [C2] [C3] [C5]
- v) Nature and wildlife area (work in progress). Willow arch built by young people and their families, wooden walkway, Bug-in-ham Palace and water butt now in place. [A3] [B1] [B3] [C1] [C2][C3]
- vi) Worked with St Bede's to create a reflective area for the primary school – built with the help of young people from St Benet Biscop and the Youth Ambassadors. [C2] [C3]
- vii) The building of a willow igloo for primary children by the Youth Ambassadors (13 – 19 year olds) [A3] [B1] [C2] [C3]
- viii) Liaison with local residents and allotment holders on advice and support for the vegetable raised garden. [C1] [C2] [C3]



- Chester Court Nursing Home is our entry in the Special Award Criteria for Care / Residential / Convalescent Homes and Hospices. [A3]

- Chester Court Nursing Home has installed 5 new water butts and made their own compost from waste vegetable materials from their kitchen and grass cuttings [B2 C3]
- The side and rear of the gardens at Chester Court are been (either 'are being' or 'have been') made into 'sensory' and user friendly gardens. The garden furniture has been painted in bright colours to make it distinguishable for those residents with poor eyesight. The maintenance officer has constructed raised flower beds, accessible to wheel chair users. [A3 B2 B5 C1 C4]
- At Chester Court, a fully accessible greenhouse allows all residents, including wheelchair users, to grow tomatoes and cucumbers etc. [A3 C3 C4]
- At Chester Court a new ramp has been installed at the side of the building, with lighting, improving access for all of the residents to another area of the garden. [A3 C3 C4]
- 8 new fruit trees have been planted at the side and back and a willow wind break is planned. We also have residents going to the community garden behind the home. [A3 C3 C4]



The future – in the short term

[Brackets indicate potential scoring criteria]

- This year the residents of Chester Court are going to plant their hanging baskets choosing their own plants. The plants going into the sensory garden are being selected for fragrance, touch and noise. [A3 C3 C4]
- Children's 'grow a sunflower' competition – all schools within the town have signed up for the competition – 1600 sunflower seeds have been procured to supply all the school children. [A2 A3 C2 C3]
- Leading Link projects currently been worked on with local schools include planting decorative trees to enhance the local community and other trees for conservation purposes. [A1] [A3] [B1] [C1] [C2] [C3] [C4]
- Leading Link will be working with West End School and supporting them to create their colourful summer display across the front railings (approximately 10 troughs and planters). Older peers aged 14+ will be working with the primary school children. [A1] [A3] [B5] [C1] [C2] [C3]
- Leading Link will continue to offer conservation workshops to local children through the Children's University Scheme of which membership was paid by the West Bedlington Town Council. [C2] [C4] [C5]
- Continuation and development of the wildlife area at the back of the Lodge and maintaining the community garden. [A3] [B1] [C1] [C2] [C3]
- Planting a recycled rockery and all-year round bulbs at Attlee Park entrance with a group of young people aged 14-16 years. Local residents have offered to help with this project. £250 has been raised to carry out this project by 4 x 14 year olds. [A5] [B2] [B5] [C2] [C3]
- In partnership with local businesses the working group and other residents will install hanging baskets and tubs along Front Street and Glebe Road, together with railing planters at West End School and in front of St Cuthbert's Church [C1 C3]
- There will be a Heritage Weekend Stall to increase community awareness and involvement [C2 C4]
- Further Cherry Tree Planting along a town gateway – Netherton Lane by school children and youth ambassadors [A1 A2 A5 B5 C2 C3]
- Facilitate and judge the residents garden competition in July with awards presented in autumn. [C3]
- Redesign the flower beds at the War Memorial [A1 A2 B5]
- Feature flower bed in front of the Sun Inn to commemorate 50 years of RHS [A1 A2 B5]
- Revitalise the "Pride Of Wansbeck" rose bed to protect this endangered rose variety. [A1 A2 B1 B3 B5 C2 C3]
- Conservation of the wild orchid meadow at Bedlington Bank. [B1 C4]
- Maintain street furniture and public seating to a high standard. [B5]

- Leading Link garden project – 40 young people aged 16-17 worked over the summer to build raised beds, pagoda's, a water feature, and seating area. Also latest addition is to build a brick outdoor pizza oven with the help of a local builder. [A3 B5 C2 C3 C4]
- The area to the back of the Lodge has a large mural depicting the four seasons painted by 16 year olds – there is another space to paint a second mural with targeted young people. [A3 B5 C2 C3]
- The Community Allotment is also working alongside Care Homes, Schools and Residents on other projects including a “grow our own pizza” with a local school and a project concentrated on promoting healthier eating through fruit and vegetable eating and growing. [C1 C2 C3]
- Sunday School children to plant up floral displays at St Cuthbert's Church main door [A3 C3]
- Christmas Lights switch on event [C2 C4]
- Big Event. The 7th annual family event organised by Leading Link, the 3rd time in Bedlington at Attlee Park. The event is likely to attract approximately 3,000 visitors based on last year's figures. As Attlee Park is the home of the old Miners Picnic, the event will start with a parade of banners from all the local school down Front Street following the Salvation Army. The planning committee includes schools, local businesses, councillors, police, Northumberland County Council, residents and young people. Activities include entertainment, refreshments, stalls, side shows and various activities and there will be 56 young volunteers on the field all day as per every year as well as approximately 25 adult volunteers. This year's event on 21st June 2014 will also mark the official launch of the new refurbished band stand. The Bedlington in Bloom group will use the event to enhance public awareness of its work to date and recruit further volunteers. [A5 B5 C1 C3 C4 C5]



The future – in the longer term

- The Council is proposing an expansion of Christmas lights in the trees along Front Street East – to show off the trees in winter [B5 C4]
- Autumn and Winter Bulb Planting Projects involving local school children and youth ambassadors [A2 C1 C2]
- Hedge and Tree Planting Projects – the repair of Hawthorn hedge at the cemetery. [A1 A2 B1 B5 C1 C2 C4]
- Dr Pit Park rockery and heather beds projects with the support of local playgroup and other residents. [A1 A2 C1 C2 C4]
- Schalksmuhle Road project – specifically designed to provide all year interest with planting to be carried out by local school children [A1 A2 C1 C3]
- Atlee Park Bandstand project – youth involvement – from dereliction to outdoor performing arts area.(newspaper invite to 16 -21 year olds for creative involvement), meadow planting [A1 A2 B4 C1 C3]
- Seasonal replanting of hanging baskets and other floral displays outside commercial premises on Front Street and Glebe Bank with the support of the local allotment associations, schools and community disabled garden. [A2 C3]
- Increase community partnerships and enhance those already in place [C2]
- Secure greater level of funding from the community and local supporters [C5]
- Improve the general feeling of wellbeing in the community through horticulture [ALL C]
- Expand the gardening competition by increasing competition categories specifically to encourage involvement by children. [C3]
- Move to more environmentally friendly products and resources [A2 B2]
- Secure the conservation of the “Bedlington Rose” by encouraging local residents to grow that specific variety with the possibility of a best grown Bedlington Rose competition. [B1 B3]



In conclusion

‘Bedlington in Bloom’ aims to give every member of the community the opportunity to take part in communal and horticultural activities and enable those who cannot participate to enjoy and take pleasure in what has been achieved.

We aim to raise awareness and generate support from all sections of the community for an ongoing programme of activities and initiatives that will provide year round interest.

We hope to make every West Bedlington resident feel proud and involved in improving West Bedlington.