



VILLAGE

Elsham

Silver

Judged Tuesday 2nd July 2024 Judges: Richard Stephen and Nicholas Litherland

Judges Award to Elsham Parish Nature Reserve, formerly an old quarry site now transformed into a wonderful wildflower and wildlife facility which as it develops will be fully enjoyed by villagers and visitors alike.

Introduction

On a dry but overcast afternoon we were met at Elsham Village Hall by Sandra Van Oosterhout and Andrew Horner. They provided welcome refreshments and discussed their involvement with this year's first entry into East Midlands in Bloom for Elsham village. The village is picturesque with attractive housing and gardens within a rural community. A very good first time entry. Well done, Elsham.

Section A: Horticulture

The tour commenced at the village hall where planters were looking colourful with a combination of annuals and perennials. To the back of the hall was an attractive newly planted herbaceous border with a wide variety of plants on display. In the landscaped area at the front of the Hall, is a small memorial garden in memory of the Elsham Wold Airfield and it's WW2 connections. An attractive sculpture of a Lancaster Bomber Aircraft surrounded by red poppies, within a bed of shrubs and perennials was beautifully displayed. Walking through the village towards the Elsham village sign the judges viewed several attractive gardens. At the Village Entrance Sign, a well planted border of annuals and perennials welcomed the visitor. This flower bed was thoughtfully planted with a great choice of colour and interest by Di and Andrew. We passed the old Telephone Box, with 9 creative planters attached to the windows looking very healthy and colourful with a mixture of annuals. We also saw the Play Park with well maintained grounds and with a great selection of play equipment. Several well planted barrier troughs were also on display at the entrance. The beautifully painted old horse drawn plough share was another attractive feature, with a fixed base and a barrel planted with annuals. As the judges continued their walking tour through the village a lovely grass Island Bed with planted borders was being maintained by Di. Mixed annuals and perennials were on display and the word Elsham spelt out in white stones created quite a feature. Throughout the village the judges could see well maintained verges and grassed areas. Special mention for Paul Richardson who personally ensures that the grass verge outside his home is always in tip top condition. During the walking tour, judges were impressed to see that resident's gardens were

beautifully planted and being well cared for. e.g. 16 New Street, 7 Astley Corner, 37 Church Street. Too many to mention all of them individually but they all contributed significantly to Elsham's colourful street scene. At the Home Farm Care Home, we saw an attractive colourful display of trees, shrubs, and wide range of perennials to the entrance of the home. All the village planted areas and containers were well stocked with healthy plants being well maintained.

Section B: Environment

Elsham's real attraction apart from being a quiet attractive residential village is the Nature Reserve at the site of the old Quarry. On the day of our visit the open spaces were covered with Oxeye daisy, teasel and purple thistle with grassland covering the chalk. Over the years many native trees have been planted offering dense woodland which contrasts with the areas of open space. This area is a nature reserve for wildlife as well as many varieties of wildflowers. This area is well managed with good signage for the visitor. There is an awareness throughout the village of consideration towards wildlife within the environment, with wildflower beds, a native pink Hawthorn recently planted and perennial planting replacing summer annuals. Bird boxes, bat boxes and hedgehog houses can be seen around the village. There is evidence of pride for Elsham within the community as paths and open spaces are neat and tidy. All Saints Church in its woodland setting was looking very picturesque and well maintained. Outside the Nature Reserve entrance was a newly created wildflower area with bench. This very nice little feature which is developing well.

Section C: Community

Throughout the visit there was constructive conversation from Sandra and Andrew regarding the future planning of the village and its involvement in East Midlands in Bloom. Sandra mentioned that the residents are kept informed of village news / activities through Facebook, Elsham Website and Notice Boards. Local Press are the Scunthorpe Telegraph and the Grimsby Telegraph. There is a great sense of community spirit which no doubt will be drawn upon. Funding and support has come from the Parish Council, the North Lincs Council and receiving of grants from Tesco, Anglian Water who painted benches and the Telephone Box and local businesses such as MFG garage, Nelipack and T R Window Cleaning who did excellent work cleaning all the road signs, salt bins and bus stop. Volunteers within the local community do organised litter picking twice a year, and they are lucky to have a local 'handy man' who regularly clears the paths of weeds and detritus.

Areas for Development

Section A: Horticulture

The planting around the village is great, to a good standard and varied, with consideration towards watering, and prioritising wildlife. Keep this up and think about other areas that may benefit from additional displays, may be at bus shelters and communal areas? You may consider some additional planting within the church yard as it is an 'open' church yard? You explained about the play park land being rented, but adding a few native trees may give shelter and soften the boundary to this area? Involve more residents who have some lovely gardens to become involved. Consider entering the Best Front Garden Award next year or the Best Business e.g. Home Farm Residential Home

Section B: Environment

You are well aware of the impact that the village and surrounding areas have upon your environment, continue with this approach, and involve villagers to become aware of the ethos of your village life, promoting your sustainable practices to all. Promote water harvesting, composting, bug hotels, bird boxes etc. Consider introducing a series of Interpretation Boards within the Local Nature Reserve for wildlife and wildflower information. With the help of the Wildlife Trust consider going for SSI status. Also, at the wildflower area located with its own bench on the way to the former quarry. More information regarding Elsham's heritage would be beneficial - Elsham Wolds Airfield, Elsham Hall, Richard Hornsby Agricultural Engineer, Wallace L Sargent Astronomer, George Green - American Civil War etc.

Section C: Community

Continue to research sources of sponsorship from local business, your Parish Council and North Lincs Council. Look for new opportunities for funding etc. Adding the Squadron Badge onto street signs and positioning the plough within the village gives a great feeling of community respect for your rural and social history, so look for additional interest relating to your village to promote. Try and set up an 'in Bloom' Group to organise and promote the activities within Elsham village life, so that the tasks associated with 'East Midlands in Bloom' are shared between the community and not the responsibility of just a few. Promote your litter pick days to encourage more to become involved. Try to develop links with your local school and other voluntary organisations. In the news and events listed on the Parish Council Website it was noted that you listed all the people / volunteers who had been carrying out tasks various tasks in the village - grass cutting, planting, watering etc. It would have been nice to this in your portfolio. Again, the judges could have looked up your list of events and activities. Consider listing some in your portfolio. Try to develop links with Radio Scunthorpe / Radio Lincolnshire. There was difficulty in opening the Digital Portfolio. Consider a different format of presenting it or print out a copy in advance for the judges on arrival.

Marks:

Section A: 32

Section B: 24

Section C: 18

Total Marks Awarded **74**

Awarded Silver

