



PRESS RELEASE

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Dibbers at the ready as RHS reveals 2018 Britain in Bloom finalists

- **Royal Horticultural Society (RHS) reveals finalists in nationwide competition that rewards environmental responsibility, community participation and horticultural achievement**
- **Now in its 54th year, 76 community gardening groups will battle it out to be crowned the cleanest, greenest and most beautiful place in the UK**
- **South West region set to field the highest number of entries in 2018**

Planters poised and dibbers at the ready as 76 community gardening groups prepare to battle it out in the Royal Horticultural Society's (RHS) 2018 Britain in Bloom competition.

Now in its 54th year, the nationwide competition pits rural villages, urban corners and city centres against one another across a range of criteria that includes horticultural know-how, community engagement, efforts to bolster biodiversity and climate change adaptation.

Finalists are put forward to the national final based on their progress locally and will be scored by a team of RHS national judges in the summer.

In 2018 the finalists will compete across 12 categories with the South West laying claim to the greatest number of finalists. Seven will represent the region, including two – Sidmouth and Truro - in the illustrious Champion of Champions category.

Didsbury in Manchester, the market towns of Market Bosworth in Leicestershire and Newcastle-under-Lyme in Staffordshire and the Welsh town of Usk complete this year's Champion of Champions line up.

In 2017 the category was won by the Lancashire village of Elswick which impressed the judges with its high impact floral displays, heritage orchard and strong community support.

A new awards category has also been introduced for town and city centres in 2018 in recognition of the vital role of green spaces in urban areas and their positive impact on health and wellbeing, flood prevention and wildlife.

Chair of the Britain in Bloom judging panel, Darren Share said: “The Britain in Bloom campaign galvanises communities and provides the driving force for thousands of gardening enthusiasts across the country.

“Britain in Bloom groups work tirelessly throughout the year to tackle local issues and improve the place they call home. Everyone benefits from the work these groups carry out and I have seen first-hand the positive impact Britain in Bloom has in bringing communities together.”

Paul Hayhurst, Elswick in Bloom’s coordinator said: “We started entering Britain in Bloom to improve our village which two decades ago was uncared for and had problems with litter and vandalism. We never expected to win and everyone was absolutely over the moon. Since then, there’s been far more interest - neighbouring areas have been inspired to set up their own groups, we’ve been invited to give talks and we’ve had lots more visitors to Elswick. It’s been incredible.”

The RHS Britain in Bloom judges will visit the finalists in August with the winners of each category and finalists’ final score – ranging from Gold to Bronze - announced at an awards ceremony in Belfast on 19th October.

For the first time, a new BBC Two series following the quintessentially British competition is set to air this spring, featuring five of this year’s national finalists – Immingham, Lytham, Shrewsbury, Tewkesbury and Usk.

For more information about RHS Britain in Bloom and to search for community gardening groups in your area please visit <https://www.rhs.org.uk/communities/find-a-group-search-form>

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For images, further information or to arrange interviews please contact:

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Notes to the Editor:

Britain in Bloom UK Finalists 2018 (by Region/Nation)

Anglia

Entry name	Category
Bury St Edmunds	Large Town
Hunstanton	Coastal under 12k
Norwich	City
Wisbech	BIDs, Town & City Centres
Woburn	Village

Cumbria

Entry name	Category
Bothel	Village
Dalston	Large Village
Penrith	Large Town
Stanwix	Urban Community
Ulverston	Town

Guernsey (Floral Guernsey)

Entry name	Category
Forest Parish	Large Village

East Midlands

Entry name	Category
Draycott	Large Village
Elmton	Village
Evington	Urban Community
Immingham	Town
Market Bosworth	Champion of Champions
Northampton	City

Heart of England

Entry name	Category
Halesowen	Urban Community
Newcastle-under-Lyme	Champion of Champions
Oswestry	Large Town
Shrewsbury	Small City
Tewkesbury	Town
Upton	Large Village

Jersey (Natural Jersey)

Entry name	Category
Gorey	Village
St. Clement	Coastal under 12k
St. Helier	Coastal over 12k

London

Entry name	Category
Bankside	Urban Community
City of London	Town
Ham & Petersham	Small Town
Paddington Now	BIDs, Town & City Centres

Northumbria

Entry name	Category
Durham	Small City
Morpeth	Town
Ponteland	Small Town
Tanfield	Village

North West

Entry name	Category
Chipping	Village
Congleton	Large Town
Didsbury	Champion of Champions
Lytham	Coastal under 12k

Rochdale	Small City
Whalley	Small Town

Scotland (Keep Scotland Beautiful)

Entry name	Category
Aberdeen	City
East Haven	Coastal under 12k
Falkirk Delivers	BIDs, Town & City Centres
Linlithgow	Town
Perth	Large Town

South and South East

Entry name	Category
Bournemouth	Coastal over 12k
Cranbrook	Small Town
Deal	Coastal over 12k
Royal Tunbridge Wells	Large Town
Wareham	Small Town
Wimborne	Town

South West

Entry name	Category
Clovelly	Village
Falmouth	Coastal over 12k
Kingsbridge	Small Town
Sidmouth	Champion of Champions
St Austell	BIDs, Town & City Centres
Thornbury	Town
Truro	Champion of Champions

Thames & Chilterns

Entry name	Category
Amersham	Town
Reading	City
Wolverton and Greenleys	Urban Community

Ulster

Entry name	Category
Ballymena	Large Town
Belfast City	City
Castlecaulfield	Village
Derry City	Small City
Hillsborough	Large Village

Yorkshire

Entry name	Category
Beverley	Large Town
Filey	Coastal under 12k
Leeds	BIDs, Town & City Centres

Scholes	Large Village
Spofforth	Village

Wales

Entry name	Category
Colwyn Bay	Large Town
Fishguard & Goodwick	Coastal under 12k
Rhuddlan	Small Town
Usk	Champion of Champions
Wolfscastle	Village

Notes to the Editor:

Britain in Bloom with the RHS

- UK's biggest community gardening campaign involves up to 300,000 passionate local volunteers who work year-round to keep our neighbourhoods and streets green, clean and thriving.
- Bloom was started by the British Tourist Authority as a way to attract visitors to the UK through floral displays. In 2001, the RHS took over as organisers and have developed the campaign to include greater focus on community participation and environmental responsibility.
- In 2006, the RHS launched a new grass roots level for Bloom – It's Your Neighbourhood (IYN) – which is aimed at small volunteer groups (such as youth groups, 'Friends of' groups, etc.)
- Since 1964, Bloom has evolved from what many saw as a rural hanging basket competition to a major socio-environmental campaign that is improving villages, towns and cities across the UK

About the RHS

The Royal Horticultural Society was founded in 1804 by Sir Joseph Banks and John Wedgwood to inspire passion and excellence in the science, art and practice of horticulture. Our vision is to enrich everyone's life through plants, and make the UK a greener, healthier, happier and more beautiful place. We believe everyone in every village, town and city should benefit from growing plants to enhance lives, build stronger, healthier, happier communities and create better places to live.

We held our first flower shows in 1820, were granted a Royal Charter in 1861 and acquired RHS Garden Wisley, our flagship garden, in 1903. From our first meetings in a small room off London's Piccadilly, we have grown to become the world's largest gardening charity. At our gardens and shows and through our scientific research, publications, libraries and our education and community programmes we inspire a passion for gardening and growing plants, promote the value of gardens, demonstrate how gardening is good for us and explain the vital roles that plants undertake.

The RHS is committed to bring the joy of gardening to millions more people, inspire the next generation of gardeners and invest in the future to safeguard a £10.4 billion industry employing more than 300,000 people. We are entirely funded by our members, visitors and supporters. RHS membership is for anyone with an interest in gardening. Support the RHS and help us secure a healthy future for gardening. For more information call: 020 3176 5820, or visit www.rhs.org.uk/join

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