

Cumbria in Bloom Results 2017

On 21st September the Cumbria in bloom results were awarded at The Golf Hotel in Silloth. There were slides from around the county to show the many varied participants in this years competition. Dalston was very well represented with members of the village present. We won seven trophies and several certificates.

For the fourth year running Dalston village won the National Park Trophy Gold award in the Cumbria in Bloom Best Large Village category. The trophy was presented to Ronnie Auld by Alistair Wannop the High Sheriff of Cumbria. We were awarded the Kimberly Clark Trophy for the best village overall. It was presented by the Cumbria Lord Lieutenant, Mrs Claire Hensman. She also presented a runner-up certificate for the Sellafield License Co. trophy for the Large Tidy Village category as well as a special award. This was the Cavendish Trophy for 'Greening Grey Britain for Wildlife' given to the Grange Garden Group for their work at the Dalston Medical Centre. They also received £50. The Cumbria County Council Carlisle Local Committee trophy for achievement in the district was also presented to the group by Cllr John Mallinson. This has been an immensely successful project with a lot of diligent hard work contributed.



St Michael's School entered the schools gardening category and won the Container Garden section. A shield will be presented to the pupils along with £25. In the special nominations awards the Lakeland Limited trophy for the best retail/hospitality was won by the Dalston Bowling Club and presented by Cllr Elizabeth Mallinson. She also presented the Continental Landscapes trophy, a special category to Bobby Nichol for the High Forge and Bishops Mill area.

We achieved 3 certificates for the RHS It's Your Neighbourhood category for the Grange Garden Group – outstanding, thriving for the Jubilee Garden Group and the Dalston Station

Gardeners. Finally Dalston achieved gold in the Cumbria In Bloom Pride In Your Community Awards.



trophies and certificates that were brought back to Dalston lined up in the photo.

Very Well Done!

Ann Byers

Chairman, Dalston Parish Council



standard for the highest Gold Award.

The judges' report began with very complimentary comments about Dalston Bowling Club, where they thought that the green itself was in superb condition and that the container and basket planting was of the highest standard, in fact much better than in 2016. They felt that the Grange Estate added a new dimension to the entry and were most impressed by a few of the gardens which they knew had been part of the Grange Open Garden days earlier in the year. They recognised how strong the sense of community is in Dalston, something we know ourselves and are very proud of.

Dalston was marked under three main categories: namely -Horticultural Achievement - Environmental Responsibility and Community Participation. Summaries of the comments and recommendations for development made by the judges, coming directly from their marking sheet, are below.

Horticultural Achievement:

The judges highlighted particularly:

Many examples of good quality perennial plantings.

In the Jubilee Garden they thought that the new wildflower area was in first class condition and that the quality in some of the new beds, albeit only two years old, was striking.

It is not often that judges mention public toilets but on this occasion they were pleased to do so and commented particularly on the attractiveness of the surrounding garden.

Dalston Progresses from 2016

Dalston wins Gold

Liz Auld is given a prestigious RHS Community Champion Award

The two Royal Horticultural Society judges, Rae Beckwith and James Cordingley, who visited Dalston in August, 'were delighted to see progress had been made during the last twelve months'. When Dalston was judged in the RHS Britain in Bloom competition in 2016 they pointed out many areas where Dalston fell short of their

Areas for Development:

The judges were impressed by the new plantings in the surgery garden. These will improve further over time.

Kelsey's Meadow has huge potential and in time will prove to be a first class addition to the area. The judges thought that consideration could be given to easy-to-read interpretation boards which the passing public will understand and engage with.

Environmental Responsibility:

Despite our attempts to obtain a licence for some minor cleaning of the Mill Race, the judges were, nevertheless, impressed by the section around The Forge and Mill. They thought that the water quality looked very good and the Race complimented the fine gardens in the area.

The on-going University of Cumbria study, involving the slow worms, which is being carried out in the churchyard, was of particular interest.

The judges commented that the churchyard and cemetery maintenance plan, which is sympathetic to the natural environment, had been well thought out.

Areas for Development:

It was noted that the bench on Riverside perhaps ought to be replaced.

They thought that more information boards would be useful and could further promote issues such as heritage, the slow worm story and the management of the conservation areas.

For the second year the judges noted the deterioration of the road surface in The Square and thought that resurfacing would be beneficial for improved safety and actually commented that they would like to have talked to County Council staff about the issue.

Community Participation:

Because of the open garden initiative, Dalston Festival and Church Flower Festival the village was full of volunteers and this demonstrated to the judges the strength of the community.

The judges thought that the presentation was clear and concise and were pleased with the publicity obtained, particularly the television coverage.

They noticed the strong link between the Parish Council and the Bloom Group and felt that the skill in obtaining additional funding from Friends and Sponsors was to be applauded. They noted the involvement of Carlisle City Council (road sweeping) and Wigton Town Council (grass cutting).

The judges also commented on the age range of our volunteers, mentioning specifically our '80 to 90-year-old gardeners'.

Areas for Development:

The judges hoped that new ways might be found to expand the membership of the Gardening Club from its not insignificant waiting list.

They recognised and lamented the difficulty of involving younger people in the judges' tour, outside of the school term, and would have particularly liked to have heard from the Scouts.

500 teams of Bloom volunteers from across the country attended the awards. Dalston was joined by the Penrith Business Improvement District, which won a Gold Award. The Penrith BID was also the category winner, for which they received a separate award. Kendal was awarded a Silver Gilt, as was Silloth.

Joining Liz Auld on the stage for the presentation of the Community Champion was Joan Robinson from Penrith. Their awards were in recognition of their contributions to their Bloom groups' success, in Liz's case over 20 years.

Ronnie Auld, Dalston in Bloom

Report for the Cumberland News

Last Friday 6 members of the Dalston in Bloom steering group went to Llandudno for the 2017 Britain in Bloom Awards. Dalston represented Cumbria in the Large Village category and had been invited to take part in the Britain in Bloom Awards last year, gaining a Silver Gilt Award. Volunteers in the village had worked hard to improve the village and to go for Gold this year. The judging had been in August and a nail biting wait until we got to Llandudno for the results.

The glittering Awards Ceremony was jointly hosted by Llandudno and the Royal Horticultural Society and sponsored by Conwy Borough Council, celebrating 50 years of Wales in Bloom. It was held in the ultra modern Cymru Arena which seemed larger than the square at Dalston, strobe lighting and a huge stage and screens made an exciting atmosphere and about 50 round tables, with trees or flowers and lights on them soon filled up with Bloom groups from all corners of Britain.

The compere was James Alexander-Sinclair, writer and broadcaster who kept things moving in a very humorous fashion, prizes were presented by Iolo Williams who you may have seen on Spring/Autumn Watch. Luckily we didn't have long to wait, as the large village was the fifth category to be presented, everyone there knew they were getting an award, but not which colour it would be. Ronnie Auld and Pat Jackson were poised at the approach to the stage while three Silver Gilt and one Gold were announced before we heard, DALSTON, CUMBRIA.... A short pause like on Strictly... then **GOLD**, we jumped to our feet, cheering, as did all our table and other Cumbrians in the audience and we haven't stopped smiling since, all that hard work, but Wow it was worth it. What a night.

Seventy five awards were presented in total, other Cumbrian groups were Silloth {Silver Gilt} Penrith BID (Gold and Category winner, a fantastic result as they were in competition with Blackburn, London Bridge, Mansfield and Norwich) and Kendal {Silver Gilt}

The evening was punctuated by a drinks reception, complete with harpist and splendid Town Crier and a delicious 3 course meal and superb Welsh Male Voice Choir. Iolo Williams gave an impassioned address about his love of nature and the importance of working in gardening to support it.

A wonderful evening was brought to a close with special awards for Britain in Bloom Community Champion Winners and we were delighted that our own Liz Auld was one of this deserving group, and a lovely touch was that our Judges from August congratulated Liz as she descended from the stage.

The next day we had an appointment with the judges to hear their comments and were told we had made a great leap forward from last year and they were swept away from the moment they started their tour of the village at the Bowling Club. The new gardens that had been created were mentioned, the churchyard, the flower festival in the Church and particularly the obvious pride and hardwork of the volunteers in the village.

An unforgettable experience.

Well Done Dalston

Pat Geddes