**JUDGES COMMENTS 2019**

**ROLLESTON ON DOVE**

BKV awareness was achieved through articles in the parish council newsletter, in the village magazine, the Rollestonian, on the village website and Facebook page. However, judges did not find any BKV posters displayed in the village, despite the entry form stating that they could be found in 5 locations.

The entry form indicated that children’s posters would be displayed at 6 locations, but very few were actually seen. It would have helped if the locations had been marked on the map.

In May the notice boards were in good condition with neatly displayed notices. In June, the school notice board was clean and tidy, as were the notice boards in Burnside and in Bodecliffe Road and at Craythorne playing fields. The glass was smashed in the notice board at the Co-op.

There was some parish information and a few activities were advertised on the church notice board, but there was nothing about groups or contacts in the village on any of the boards and no recycling or dog fouling information.

The churchyard had been well mown on both judging visits. In May cuttings had been left on the path, probably because mowing was taking place at the time! Graves were well tended and the bench at the front of the church was in good condition. Two benches at the rear of the church were covered in lichen and needed a wash down. There were two good notice boards. At the front of the church there was an ‘ugly-bug’ display made by the local children which the June judges liked.

The village hall is within the grounds of the church and was maintained to a very good standard.

In May The Spread Eagle public house and The Jinny were clean and litter free. The hanging baskets at the Spread Eagle needed attention. In June some litter was found at the Spread Eagle, but apart from that, the surrounds were tidy. The Brookside Hotel was closed in June.

The telephone box (not included on the entry form) was tidy and in a good condition in May, but in June judges commented “that it was very dirty both inside and out and generally in a poor condition”.

In May all the bus shelters were in good condition. May judges liked the milepost seat in the shelter opposite The Spread Eagle. June judges liked the shelter and notice board with parish council information at Dovecliff Road, but it needed a sweep out. June judges liked The Spread Eagle shelter with its small notice board (bus timetable but no other information) and lovely planters. The Church Road shelter was dirty with lichen in June.

Seats and benches were in reasonable condition and free from weeds and litter. The seats opposite the Spread Eagle and in the Elizabeth Avenue play area were particularly good, but some of the other seats and benches will need attention soon.

Three village features were noted on the entry form, but their locations were not shown on the map.

May judges assumed that the village sign, the anvil and memorial area were the three features stated. The planter near the anvil contained one plant only and the area under the trees needed a lot of attention. June judges commented on the area opposite The Spread Eagle, which was tidy, fenced off and picturesque, with a bus shelter and finger post.

The large public open spaces were, in general well maintained. The grass at Craythorne playing fields was well mown, and an area was laid out as a football pitch. There was some litter here in June. Brook Hollows was a delightful conservation area in June, with no litter. The Jinny nature trail was another pleasant conservation area with a good notice board showing local information. The Jubilee Orchard was litter free. Both May and June judges had some difficulty in locating the open spaces as they were not clearly identified on the map.

All the incidental open spaces were neat and tidy, litter free and the grass appeared to have been cut regularly.

Most private gardens were well maintained, and those that were not appeared to be at vacant properties.

The children’s play equipment and safety surfaces were in good condition and generally well maintained. The slide at Elizabeth Avenue would benefit from a coat of paint.

The map did not make life easy for the judges. It provided them with the bare bones of the village and was sufficient to find their way around the village. It could be greatly improved by showing exactly where all the BKV elements to be judged are located, relating those to the numbers on the entry form and showing them by means of colored symbols and key numbers. There are many good examples of BKV maps which you could look at. Please contact The Community Foundation if you would like to see such a map or if you would like a member of the BKV Working Group to advise you.

Judges found Rolleston on Dove generally very clean and tidy, with very little litter and no dog fouling. June judges commented “we found its unique treatment of water delightful. It is a very attractive village which we will visit again”. It was difficult to discern from evidence on the ground the extent of community awareness and involvement. The entry pack contained information on the village’s excellent preparation for entry into the BKV competition. Meetings had been held seeking to involve all the residents in preparing the village for judging. A BKV children’s poster competition was publicized by the Parish Council and the winning posters were an important part of the village’s BKV entry. Sadly, this initiative did not translate well to what appeared on the ground. No BKV posters were see and very few children’s posters. It was a shame that such worthwhile efforts that had been made in preparation for the competition did not materialize “on the ground”.

It is good to see Rolleston on Dove entering the Best Kept Village competition after a break of 20 years. Lessons can be learned from the experience this year. With a good map, plenty of BKV and children’s posters and attention to detail, Rolleston on Dove could shine in the competition in the future and perhaps challenge for top honors soon. If the Parish Council wished to discuss the comments and seek further advice on how things could be improved for next year, please contact Jo Cooper at The Community Foundation and arrange a date for a meeting. Thank you for entering the competition this year and for making a good first impression. We hope to see you in 2020.

John T Perry MBE

Chairman, BKV Working Group