

## **BEST KEPT VILLAGE COMPETITION 2014 - JUDGES' COMMENTS FULFORD**

BKV awareness was tackled through items on the village website, emails to residents, the parish council newsletter, the Stone & Eccleshall Gazette and the Staffordshire Newsletter. There were a number of BKV posters at village entrances and on noticeboards.

There were displays of good quality and eye-catching children's posters around the village.

All the noticeboards were in good condition, but the one on The Green may soon need some attention. Notices were neatly displayed.

There was a good range of up-to-date local information with good coverage of refuse collection and recycling and plenty of covering village activities and events.

The church surrounds looked very good overall. The grass was well cut, but there were a few weeds at the front of the church. Some grass areas had understandably not been cut in May because the large expanses of bluebells were in flower; but there were some areas of untidy grass still in June. The seats and benches were generally sound, but some will need painting/varnishing soon. The noticeboards were in urgent need of refurbishment.

The surrounds and car park of the village hall were neat and tidy and weed-free. However, in May, there were a great many cigarette ends around the entrance and perhaps a bin could be provided to tackle this problem.

There was a pleasant outside drinking area at The Shoulder of Mutton, which looked generally well cared for, except for some litter and a few weeds, especially around the car park.

The telephone box was very clean inside and the surrounds were litter and weed-free.

The bus shelter was in good condition and clean and tidy inside and out, with up-to-date timetables.

Seats and benches were generally in sound condition, apart from the one outside the village hall which required urgent attention (referred to last year). The seat on The Green needed a coat of paint. The surrounds to both were clean and tidy.

There were excellent planted features on the corner of Meadow Lane and on the bridge in particular. The features on The Green, including the village sign and the well, were praised by the May judges.

The war memorial surrounds were well maintained, but the June judges noticed a series of cracks in the war memorial itself. The May judges wondered if the surrounds would be enhanced by some planting around the base of the memorial?

The May judges said that Tudor Hollow was a generally pleasant area; but it did need some "tidying up" and it was spoilt by dog mess. Other small open spaces and verges were tidy, but the appearance of the Village Green was damaged by lots of grass cuttings in June.

Almost all the private gardens were very well maintained; and the June judges said that some “stood out as being magnificent”.

The equipment in both play areas was very good and the safety surfaces were sound. There was, however, litter in the area near the village hall and judges were concerned about the lack of a fence between the play area and the wooded area at the rear.

The map was clear and easy enough to follow with a good use of colours and symbols to identify BKV features. However, there are still one or two anomalies (e.g. there is no noticeboard at Town End, the symbols for noticeboards are different on the small and large scale maps) which should be remedied. This should cause no problems.

There was very little litter (apart from the exceptions referenced above) and only one dog mess (in May). There was plenty of evidence of BKV awareness of and involvement in BKV.

The residents clearly care for their village and respond to the “requirements” of BKV. A very good standard has been reached in achieved in recent years and the hard work put in this year maintained those standards. Competition was again very close in the Stafford area and very little separated the “best” villages. Congratulations on what has been achieved in 2014 and on achieving Highly Commended again. Well done and good luck in 2015!

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