

## **BEST KEPT VILLAGE COMPETITION 2015 - JUDGES' COMMENTS FULFORD**

BKV awareness was tackled through the Village News, notes in Stone Life and Newsletter, the church magazine, the village website, emails to residents, posters, etc. (A comprehensive programme!) There were two excellent BKV banners at the village entrances and BKV posters at strategic locations, on noticeboards, at the village hall and elsewhere throughout the village.

There were some excellent displays of children's posters on the village hall boards, on the Village Green and (a surprise find!) on the fence leading to the small open space near the Green. The posters were "colourful and eye-catching" and "encouraged residents to keep their village clean and tidy" (May judges).

All the noticeboards (except one at the church) were in very good condition, with a new one off Fulford Road. All notices were neatly displayed.

There was a good range of local up-to-date local information on Parish Council matters, local events and activities, dog fouling, recycling, local contact names, etc. There seemed to be plenty going on in the Fulford community.

The surrounds of the church were neat and tidy in May and June, with well mown grass, the remains of bluebells and sensible conservation areas. However, in July the churchyard was disappointing. The grass was untidy and appeared to have been "roughly cut", edges to footpaths and grave areas were "ragged" and there were quite a few weeds – but no litter anywhere. The noticeboard near the road looked very "tired", but there was a new one near the front entrance. A number of the seats and benches needed paint/varnish. There were two attractive small planters at the front door.

The car park and general surrounds of the village hall were very neat and tidy. There were just a few weeds along the car park edges, but some very attractive, well-maintained planting areas, neat grass and no litter.

The pub car park was excellent, with no weeds or litter. The outside drinking area and the pub frontage were both very tidy (and welcoming!)

The telephone box was immaculate inside and the surrounds were extremely tidy, with no weeds or litter.

The bus shelter was in very good condition, with no litter or graffiti inside and some posters on display. The surrounds were weed and litter-free.

All the seats and benches were in good condition and the surrounds were free from long grass, weeds and litter.

There were some excellent timber planters, eg at the corner of Meadow Lane, smaller planted tubs and an attractive planted feature on the bridge parapet. The Jubilee Post and the Well were also attractive and well-maintained village features.

The war memorial was disappointing and looked uncared for. The stonework needed a good clean (most names were unreadable), the grass surrounds were untidy and rough grass extended right to the base of the memorial. It is a simple structure which deserves more care and attention.

Verges were well mown throughout the village and the Village Green was in excellent condition throughout the judging period. The small open space at the village hall was well-maintained, but there was long grass and weeds all around the bottom of the fencing (perhaps it had been sprayed, but it still looked very untidy and unattractive). The small open space near the Village Green was a very pleasant, well-kept area, but was marred by a dog mess on the grass at the edge of the footpath in July.

Apart from one or two, private gardens were maintained to a very high standard indeed. Some were “exceptional” (July judges).

The equipment and safety surfaces in the play area were excellent, the grass was beautifully mown and there was no litter. It looked good throughout the judging period.

The map was generally clear and accurate with good use of colour and symbols. Some judges found the very small BKV reference numbers hard to see – particularly in the rain! However, the multiple copies of the laminated map were much appreciated, particularly in July! (No children’s posters were shown on the fence leading to the small open space (see above) but this is a very minor criticism.)

No litter and only one small dog mess (in late July) were seen. There was very clear evidence of BKV awareness and involvement and the village had obviously worked hard over a number of months to establish and maintain a consistently high standard over the vast majority of BKV features. Judges were disappointed with the churchyard in July, but particularly impressed by the appearance of an open spaces and by the very good clear up which had clearly taken place after Fulfest.

Judges described Fulford as “delightful village”, which “it was a pleasure to visit.” The village looked in excellent condition overall and all those who were involved in BKV had done very well. Congratulations on a very good effort overall and being Best Small Village and Trophy Winner in the Stafford area this year. Good luck in 2016!

John T Perry, MBE  
Chairman, BKV Working Group

September 2015