

Ludlow in Bloom

Current Committee Members

Cllr Jim Smithers, Chairman
Cllr Mrs Viv Parry, Vice Chairman
Cllr Mrs Rosanna Taylor-Smith
Mr Colin Sheward, Treasurer
Mrs Pat Gormley, Secretary
Mr Alan Cook
Mrs Bettine Howes
Mrs Pauline Bruce
Mrs Judy Robertson



History

Ludlow Town Council 'gave birth' to Ludlow in Bloom in early 2004. The 'midwife' was Paul Russell, then Town Clerk, who had experience of 'In Bloom' from his work in Cheltenham. Once the committee of Ludlow in Bloom was formed, Ludlow Town Council took more of a back seat and let the committee have a reasonably free hand.

Several Ludlovians were attendees at early meetings but many of the committee have come from outside the immediate area (previous homes were in areas such as Nottingham, Lancashire, Hampshire, Ireland, London and the Home Counties); previous involvement in making the most of the area in which they lived is a common theme.

Ludlow Town Council has always financially supported Ludlow in Bloom, initially with a grant of £1,500 p.a. and latterly with a grant of £2,500 p.a. When Ludlow in Bloom first began, the council used contractors to provide and maintain their planted areas such as Old Street, St John's Gardens and Lower Corve Street as well as the Castle Gardens, the Garden of Rest, Wheeler Road Playing Fields and the Linney Recreation Ground. Latterly direct employees known as the Direct Labour Force have been employed and their knowledge and muscle power has been invaluable to Ludlow in Bloom.



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Sponsor a Tub

In 2005 Ludlow in Bloom started their first campaign to introduce new plantings to the town centre with the addition of half barrel planters. From the initial introduction of 12 tubs, these have now grown to in excess of 70. About 30% have been sponsored by individuals and businesses around the town – for £30p.a. a business can sponsor an existing tub and for a further £10 one off payment can have a plaque attached to the tub to advertise their sponsorship. The remainder of the tubs have been paid for out of Ludlow in Bloom funds. One of the main initial sponsors was the Ludlow and District Horticultural Society which has from the start sponsored the 6 tubs located in Top Square (Events Square). Sponsorship buys maintenance of the tub, replacement planting and both winter and summer bedding plants. There are also 15 rectangular tubs, five of which are located on the entrance roads to Ludlow and ten outside the library.



Competitions

2005 also saw the start of the local competitions. From then there have annually been several competitions for local children including plant growing and art. In 2005 children were provided with a plug plant of a petunia, in 2006 with 4 daffodil bulbs, in 2007 with a geranium, in 2008 with a rudbeckia, in 2009 with a marigold and then 2010 with a busy lizzie. In 2010, almost 1100 children are taking part in this competition. Judging takes place initially in the local area, the 3 best representing their school (St Laurence's, Ludlow Infants, Ludlow Juniors, Clee Hill and Bishop Hooper) or Brownie pack (Ludlow 1st Brownies, Ludlow 2nd Brownies) in the final. The art is judged in age groups and for the last 4 years the winning entries have formed the covers for the portfolio (details later). All the winning art has been on display in Ludlow Library which has always been supportive of Ludlow in Bloom. The Children's Art Competition and the Children's Plant Growing Competition have always been sponsored by Ludlow in Bloom. In 2008 a new Children's Environmental Competition was sponsored by Mrs. Stephanie Lee. This was launched in tandem with the South Shropshire District Council Streetscene team and was a poster competition for children between the ages of 7 and 16 with the brief to encourage members of the public to 'Bag it, tie it, bin it' for both their own rubbish and dog waste. In 2009, children built models using recyclable materials, and in 2010 there is an environmental quiz and an 'energy saving in the home' poster competition. In 2009,

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there was the first mural competition and the two winning entries are now four foot panels in the museum gardens. This competition is running again in 2010.

Gardening competitions were introduced for which local sponsors provided the trophies (initially the Shropshire Star, David Lloyd Jewellers, Sellors Jewellers and David Benson Jewellers and later on Ludlow Civic Society, Ludlow Brewery, NFU Mutual, Rickards Ironmongers and Cllr Mrs. Rosanna Taylor-Smith).

In 2006 a Window Dressing competition was launched in tandem with that run by the Ludlow Festival and a trophy sponsored by Cllr Mrs. E. V. Parry was introduced. In 2007 the first Ludlow in Bloom quiz was introduced with a horticultural theme. In 2008 the quiz was set by Dr David Lloyd and was about Ludlow through the ages. In 2009 and 2010, the quizzes were set by Jenny Smallman. People pay for the quiz sheet and there is a financial prize for the winner which comes from Ludlow in Bloom funds.

As well as trophies for individual competitions, most prize winners receive a certificate. These are produced for Ludlow in Bloom by the staff at Ludlow Town Council. Additionally, children receive vouchers from the Castle Bookshop who have always gone out of their way to produce small folders mentioning Ludlow in Bloom to enclose the vouchers. In 2006 one gardening competition was sponsored by a local bank with a cheque for £100 for the winner. In later years Ludlow in Bloom has provided a more modest prize for the residential category winners.



Heart of England in Bloom

From 2004 to 2010 Ludlow has entered the Heart of England in Bloom competition which is run under the auspices of the Royal Horticultural Society. Categories are based on the size of the local population as defined by the electoral roll and Ludlow enters the Town category. The first year of entry in Heart of England in Bloom was 2004 and was rather 'hit and miss', not being totally sure of what was expected. The first year is the only year when the judges can give immediate feedback, and they did not pull their punches. Lots of vital information was given to enable Ludlow in Bloom to achieve more, but despite a rocky start they were awarded 'Bronze' at the 2004 Award Ceremony. In 2005 a Silver Gilt award was given and in 2006 the Gold standard was reached, with the bonus of winning the Town category prize. In 2007 Ludlow repeated its 2006 Gold award and in 2008 were awarded a Silver Gilt. In 2009, Ludlow received a gold award again. There is no financial reward for winning, just a certificate and an



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engraved glass trophy for winning the category. Despite the name, 'In Bloom' is not just flowers.

Judging

Judging is carried out under 3 headings – Horticultural achievement which is 50% of the points, Environmental Responsibility which is 25% of the points and Community Participation which is the remaining 25% of the points.



Horticultural Achievement covers:

- Impact (design, colour, plant selection, presentation, innovation)
- Horticultural practice (cultivation and maintenance, plant quality, sustainability)
- Residential and Community gardening (private gardens, community gardens, public buildings)
- Business areas and premises (town centre and the industrial/business parks)
- Green spaces (verges, parks and open spaces)

Environmental Responsibility covers:

- Conservation and biodiversity (wildlife areas, natural habitat)
- Resource management (recycling, minimising demand made on the environment)
- Local heritage (management and development thereof including natural heritage)
- Local environmental quality (management of vacant premises, litter, graffiti, fly posting, dog fouling)
- Pride of place (management of street furniture, signage, art in the landscape and hard landscaping)



Community participation covers:

- Development and continuity (evidence of ongoing projects)
- Communication and education (community awareness and understanding, engagement with schools, press coverage, publicity)
- Community participation (community involvement is representative of the community size and diversity)
- Year-round involvement (schedule of events and evidence of year round activity)
- Funding and Support (initiatives to secure ongoing support including local business support)



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When the judges visit Ludlow they allow Ludlow in Bloom 2 hours to give them a tour of Ludlow. This has been slightly different every year but over the 6 years the judges have been taken to St Leonard's Churchyard, Ludlow School, Wheeler Road Playing Fields, Dinham Millennium Green, Horseshoe Weir, Mill Street Weir, Casemill Weir, Breadwalk, Whitcliffe Common, Wigley's Field Allotments, Mill Street Allotments, Ludlow Infant School, Ludlow Education Centre, the BioDigester, the recycling site in Coder Road, Rocks Green, Guy Thornycroft, the Youth Centre, Ludford Park Garden of Remembrance, Ludlow Cemetery, the Railway Station, Whitefriars, the Friars Day Centre, Lower Broad Street, St Laurence's paved garden as well as several private gardens. They have also walked through much of the town centre.

From 2009, the judges have been given a 15 minute presentation on the work of Ludlow in Bloom over the last 12 months. The judges are also presented with a portfolio which is used to support what the judges have seen and to give them information on areas there has not been time to show them. The portfolio is between 30 & 40 pages of A4, comprising both text, pictures and local press cuttings. For the last 5 years the cover has been illustrated with the winning art from the annual competition. The portfolio is written by a member of the Ludlow in Bloom committee and uses information provided by many local residents



including members of the Friends of Whitcliffe, the Teme Weirs Trust, the Friends of St Leonard's, the Friends of Dinham Millennium Green, the Eco governor at Ludlow School as well as information which appears in the local press. Throughout the year photographs are taken to illustrate the portfolio and some of these are sent to the local press in the hope that they will increase awareness of Ludlow in Bloom in the local area.

Publicity

The committee of Ludlow in Bloom keep the local press apprised of what they are doing and try to get publicity for their competitions. Photographs of children involved in competitions usually make the paper, as do pictures of the judges when they visit, especially those with the local Mayor and councillors. Entry forms for the children's competitions are taken to the schools and Brownie packs; entry forms for the window dressing competition are delivered to individual shops and businesses; entry forms for the gardening competition are available in the Buttercross, the library and Jim Smithers News and entry forms for the quiz are sold by committee members and friends. Several residents are starting to ask when competitions are being held, so Ludlow in Bloom competitions are gaining acceptance as regular occurrences within the town.

Ludlow in Bloom

Fund raising

Sponsorship has already been mentioned. Ludlow in Bloom holds occasional Bingo evenings at the Victory Club each year to raise funds and these are always accompanied by a raffle. At the end of the summer bedding season some of the bedding plants which would otherwise be composted are sold to the public and this usually raises enough money to pay for winter bedding in half the tubs around the town. In 2008 and 2009 the quiz raised just over £100. The chairman and treasurer of Ludlow in Bloom also look for sources of grant money where Ludlow in Bloom meets the criteria and money has been received from 4 different sources over the last 5 years.

