

BEST KEPT VILLAGE COMPETITION 2017 – JUDGES' COMMENTS HILDERSTONE

Measures taken to create BKV awareness included articles in the Parish Magazine and on the Parish Website. There were BKV posters in the two bus shelters, on noticeboards and in the former telephone box information centre. There were also bespoke BKV banners at strategic points around the village. There were no BKV posters at village entrances, which could be considered in the future.

Although not many were seen, the children's posters were creative and eye-catching, especially the very effective 3-dimensional artwork. This was a good effort for a village with no school.

All noticeboards were in first class condition, with neatly displayed information. They all had tidy, weed free surrounds.

Local information was comprehensive, with details of re-cycling, bulky refuse collection, dog fouling awareness, Parish Council meetings and members contact details. In addition there were details of village events etc.

The churchyard was very neat, tidy and litter free, with well mown grass and neat grave areas; and there were colourful planters by the main entrance door. There were a few weeds along one edge of the church car park in July. Regular "Churchyard Clean Up Days" have certainly been very effective overall.

The village hall car park and surrounds were neat and tidy, litter and weed free in May and June, but there were some weedy areas on the car park edges. The 1970 Presentation Tree was obscured and almost inaccessible in the corner of the car park.

Both bus shelters were in a good state of repair and well used to display children's posters. In May both needed a good sweep out to remove winter "debris"; in June and July they were both very clean and tidy inside. The surrounds were clean and tidy, but the shelter in Cresswell Road had a few weeds intruding from the rear. The planters were excellent.

All seats and benches were in good condition, and well maintained, with weed and litter free surrounds. Some had planters adjacent.

The new former TCB information centre contained a history of the village and village walks leaflets, together with other local information, and there were attractive planters beside the door. There were numerous planters throughout the village, some wooden ones and some old stone feeding troughs. Judges noted the impressive Daffodil Bank.

The war memorial was in good condition, with well mown grass surrounds and no weeds or litter.

The state of the small public open spaces and verges varied throughout the judging period. The Village Green garden was quite untidy in May and June, with weed and litter around; but in July it was much improved. In July the planter on the triangle at Dingles Lane looked weedy and overgrown; but in earlier rounds of judging it was satisfactory. The footpath verge along Cresswell Road, opposite Hilderstone Road and up to the Information Centre, was rather untidy in July after the new fence had been replaced, but the judges appreciated the reason for this. All other verges were neat and tidy throughout the judging period.

All private gardens looked tidy and well maintained and judges noted a number of hanging baskets and window boxes, which greatly enhanced the appearance of the village.

The comprehensive range of children's play equipment was well maintained and the safety surfaces were in good condition. The grass surrounds were well mown.

The map was clear and accurate, with all BKV items located clearly. It might be possible to add some more street names in the newer part of the village.

The village was very clean and tidy throughout judging, with just a small amount of litter along parts of the main roads in May and June. With the busy main road running through the middle of the village judges felt that it was quite an achievement to maintain this high standard of cleanliness. No dog mess was seen at all; and community awareness and effort in BKV was evident.

Hilderstone is a pleasant, very clean and tidy small village. "Hilderstone is an impressive small village" (June Judges), which does well to sustain effort in BKV in "both the older and newer parts of the village"; and to cope with the problems of heavy through traffic. The hard work and commitment, which had been put into the BKV effort this year, resulted in an excellent Third Place in the closely fought Small Village category for the Stafford Area. Well done in 2017 and good luck next year.

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Chairman, BKV Working Group

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