

**COMMUNITY COUNCIL OF STAFFORDSHIRE
BEST KEPT VILLAGE COMPETITION 2016**

NOTES ON MARKING

GENERAL

The BKV competition is divided into five Areas within the county. A trophy is awarded by each sponsor for the Best Kept Village (Large or Small) in each Area as follows:

Stafford	-	Rubery Owen Holdings Ltd
Staffordshire Moorlands & Newcastle	-	Lafarge Cement
East Staffordshire	-	Community Council of Staffordshire
Lichfield/Cannock Chase	-	National Memorial Arboretum
South Staffordshire	-	South Staffordshire Council and South Staffordshire Housing Association

- Villages must register their intention to enter the BKV Competition by Monday 22 February 2016.
- The closing date for entries to be submitted is Monday 28 March 2016.
- The judging period is from 1 May to 22 July 2016.
- The results will be announced at the Awards Evening on Monday 1 August 2016.

Panels of judges will visit each village, once in May and once in June. The May and June marks will be aggregated and the Large and Small villages with the highest marks will go forward to the Area Finals, which will be judged in early July. The Best Large and the Best Small village in each Area will then go forward to the County Finals, which are judged in late July.

The Best Large and the Best Small villages in each Area will receive a framed certificate; and the Best village overall (Large or Small) will receive the sponsor's trophy, together with £200 towards a specific project, to be agreed by the sponsor.

The Best Large and the Small village in the County will receive a framed certificate, a shield and a tree.

There may also be an award of Special Commendation to a village which has performed consistently well over a period of years without winning; and there will be recognition of any village which has entered the BKV competition 50 or more times.

Small villages are classified as those with a population of up to 1500 and Large villages are those with a population of more than 1500 (there is no upper population limit).

FEATURES TO BE JUDGED

Referring to the features listed on the entry form, judges take the following points into consideration. The maximum possible marks for each feature are shown in brackets.

1a. BKV Publicity & Awareness

The purpose of publicity is to show awareness of the competition and to inform residents and visitors that the village is taking part in the BKV competition. Posters can be displayed at entrances to the village, at salient points within it, e.g. on notice boards, in the windows of shops and, perhaps private houses. They should be weatherproof and maintained in a neat and tidy condition throughout the judging period.

For legal reasons, posters must not be fixed to wooden telegraph and electricity poles.

The methods adopted to inform residents about the BKV competition prior to the judging period - e.g. through newsletters, fliers, parish magazines, websites, etc., should also be indicated on the entry form, and evidence provided, where possible.

5 marks

1b. Children's Posters

These indicate children's awareness of and involvement in the competition in their village. Posters should be original. If there is no school in the village, posters done by individual children can be displayed. The remarks about the display and tidiness of BKV posters apply equally to children's posters. (This feature can only be excluded from marking if there are no children living in the village).

5 marks

1c. Notice Boards

Boards should be in a good state of repair and notices displayed neatly, so that they can be easily read. The condition of church notice boards will be considered under 3 below; and school notice boards will not normally be taken into account. However where either or both display more general information, village notices etc., this will be taken into account in 1c.

5 marks

2. Local Information

This should be up-to-date and should inform residents and visitors of local events and village activities etc. and generally provide information which may be useful to residents. This can include information about parish council matters, (i.e. dates of meetings, agendas, minutes, a list of parish councillors), bus timetables, notices of village activities and events, meetings of clubs and organisations, etc. and anything else which residents and visitors might find useful.

There should also be information on recycling awareness to remind residents of arrangements for the collection of items for recycling and large items for disposal; and on dog fouling awareness, facilities for the disposal of dog waste and the penalties that may be incurred for dog fouling.

5 marks

3. Church/Chapel Surrounds, Cemeteries and Burial Grounds

Grass does not have to be cut to lawn standard, but it should be neat and tidy. Pathways should be clearly defined, trimmed and weed free; the edges to graves and headstones should be tidy; and shrub and flower borders should be free of weeds. Areas of grass kept uncut for conservation or wildlife reasons are acceptable, but **MUST** be clearly identified for judges. The condition of church notice boards and seats and benches in churchyards will be taken into account in marking this section.

10 marks

4a. Community Buildings

The surrounds to community buildings, such as village, parish and church halls and their car parks (either attached to them or separate) should be in a good state of repair, clean and tidy, and free from litter and weeds.

The car parks and surrounds to shops, health centres, and village clubs, etc. will also be taken into account and should be clean, tidy and litter and weed-free.

10 marks

4b. Public Houses

The surrounds to public houses, including their car parks, gardens and outdoor smoking, drinking and eating areas should be clean, tidy and free from litter and weeds.

5 marks

5a, b, c & d. Telephone Boxes, Bus Shelters, Seating Areas & Village Signs and Features

All these amenities and their surrounds should be in good condition, clean and tidy, and free from litter and weeds.

- Telephone boxes "Operational" TCBs, both old "red boxes" or the more "modern" variety, should be clean and tidy inside and their surrounds should be tidy, with no weeds or litter. Non-operational TCBs will be judged as village features – see below.
- Bus shelters The insides of shelters should be clean and tidy and their surrounds free from weeds and litter. Their supplementary use to display BKV or children's posters and local information will also be taken into account.

2 marks

3 marks

- Seats and benches Seats and benches should be sound, with paint and varnish in good condition and their surrounds should be free from weeds and litter. 3 marks
- Village signs and features The appearance and maintenance of all features such as village entrance signs, local directional signs to things such as churches, villages, car parks, significant areas of planting, floral displays, tubs etc, as well as local features such as wells, Millennium and Jubilee commemorative features, will all be taken into account. In addition, all non-operational telephone boxes which have been put to an alternative use will be considered as village features. The maintenance of these kinds of features themselves and their surrounds will be looked at – the absence of litter, weeds etc will be important. It is important that all village features to be judged are shown on the map, to enable judges to locate them. 3 marks

NOTE: Highway signs, village signs erected by District Councils and public footpath signs are **NOT** included in this section.

6. War Memorial

War memorials should be free-standing, outside and accessible to the public. Memorials which are within or on a building, (including lych gates) will not be taken into account; and a memorial hall will be judged as a community building. Memorials should be well cared for and have tidy weed and litter free surrounds, including paving, paths, grass, shrubs and other planted areas. Thought should be given to the display of wreaths from Remembrance Day. 5 marks

7a. Large Public Open Spaces, Greens, Playing Fields etc

These include playing fields, large parks, areas of public open space including tree and shrub planting and large allotment areas. They should be well cared for and well maintained. It is appreciated that grass areas are cut to differing standards depending on their specific uses and villages may not be able to have them cut every week. Pond surrounds, stream sides, sports grounds, large green areas, etc, included for marking **MUST** be accessible to the public. It will help judges to show such areas clearly annotated on the map. Private sports areas which are not accessible to the public will **NOT** be judged. Public footpaths within the village boundary should be shown on the map and should be tidy, unobstructed and signposted. 5 marks

7b. Small Open Spaces

These include small areas of open space such as small village greens, incidental open spaces in housing estates and elsewhere, large verges, small allotment areas, etc. All should be well maintained in all respects. 5 marks

NOTE: The idea of this split in open spaces is to take account of the disparity between open spaces in Large and Small villages. Large villages will be judged on both 7a and 7b (10 marks); but Small villages will generally be judged only on 7b (i.e. 5 marks).

7c. Private Gardens

The front gardens of houses in the village should be neat and well maintained because they provide an overall impression of the care and pride of the residents in the appearance of their village. Judges will form their impression as they travel around the village. 5 marks

8a & b. Children's Play Areas, Play Equipment, and Safety Surfaces

Play areas should be safe, with adequate fencing and free from dog-fouling or any dangerous items. Equipment should be safe and well maintained. All safety surfaces should be well maintained. (Play equipment in the grounds of public houses will **NOT** be judged unless specifically requested by the village). 5 marks

9. Map

The map is essential for the judges to find their way round the village to locate the BKV features to be judged.

7 marks

Guidance on the preparation of the map.

- The map should be up to date, clear and easy to read, and have a clear key.
- Large villages may submit more than one map, or an enlarged inset where appropriate.
- Maps should be no larger than A3 and laminating of the map will help the judges in inclement weather!
- The scale of the map and/or distances between identifiable points should be shown and there should be a north point.
- The distance of the village from the nearest main road, directions to and from nearby villages and appropriate road numbers should be marked. A small scale location map might be appropriate.
- The boundary within which BKV features are to be judged should be defined clearly.
- Each BKV feature to be judged should be clearly marked. It is not necessary to show housing, in any details but it may make it easier for the judges to find other features.
- It helps to show all BKV features to be judged in accordance with the numbered list on the entry form. Public houses should be shown separately from community buildings.
- A careful choice of coloured symbols, (perhaps a mixture of circles, triangles, squares, etc) can help judges to locate features. The use of contrasting colours can be very useful.
- Important roads should be named to assist judges who may be unfamiliar with the village.

10. General Cleanliness and Community Effort

This is a very important aspect of BKV. The village should be free from litter (both old and new) and there should be no weeds in significant areas. There should be no dog fouling (credit may be given for special posters and signs, well-sited dog bins, disposable gloves, special dog walks etc. on this matter).

The judges will be looking for clear signs of community awareness and the effort and the involvement of residents and groups in achieving the overall cleanliness of the village and its facilities in this very important aspect of BKV judging.

12 marks

Don't forget that the BKV competition is very much about community awareness and involvement, caring for the environment, pride in the village and attention to detail in all matters.

NOTES: Where a village does not have certain items, (such as a bus shelter, war memorial, major open spaces) etc, this will be taken into account in the marking.

If you have any queries on the Notes on Marking please contact John Perry, Chairman, BKV Working Group, through the Community Council.

Supplementary Competitions

All villages entering the competition will be invited to submit the two best children's posters (in 5-7 and 8-11 age groups) to the BKV Working Group and prizes will be awarded to the best children's posters in each age group.

There will be a competition for the same age groups (5-7 and 8-11) for poems on the subject of "My Village and Remembrance". Prizes will be awarded to the best poems in each age group.

There will again be a competition for entrants over 18 years of age, who will be invited to submit a painting or photograph on the theme of "The Spirit of Staffordshire"

There will also be a competition for those in the 11-16 age group based on the theme of Remembrance, through the submission of a poem, painting, essay, photographs, (or any combination of these) etc. on the subject. Prizes will be awarded to individuals and their schools. Further details will be sent following receipt of your entry

Details of these competitions will be sent following receipt of your entry form