

# Adrian Miles

Judging for Beautiful Scotland

Good afternoon everyone

Thank you for your words of introduction

It was my privilege to visit Inverbervie on our Judge's tour at the end of July as one of nine communities represented in this year's 'Large Village' category.

So in a couple of minutes I'll be telling you about my visit there from a Judge's perspective. The slides I show will give you just a tiny sample of what we saw and noted.

But first - It's been interesting for me to consider how we, as judges, are viewed as the great day approaches.

The Judges are  
coming!



And this is courtesy of Coupar Angus Pride of Place

We already have a good idea of what to expect on a visit, as each group provides a portfolio, and this is a great way to evidence your activities during the rest of the year.

We also look at any social media sites the groups have to assess how well news and activities are communicated

And I have a couple of examples from Bloom group sites, giving you an idea of the group's rallying cries for last minute preparations.

*“One of our final jobs is cleaning the bus stop at the top of The Avenue along with the one outside the Post Office and we need your help! We need a couple of folk willing to give them a clean for us”*



“One of our final jobs is cleaning the bus stop at the top of The Avenue along with the one outside the Post Office and we need your help! We need a couple of folk willing to give them a clean for us”.

I could have eaten my breakfast off the glass in that bus stop, and if you're anything like me with a bag of chips - Lauder is one village I would probably retrieve a fallen mouthful.

This was taken about 7.30pm in the evening rather sneakily from my hotel window!

Almost royalty



So I'm left in some respects feeling like royalty

Although I think this is as close as I will get!

So here's another

*“Its Wednesday, another sunny morning and 5 get-up-and-goes until Adrian & Sandy, the Beautiful Scotland judges, cast their critical eyes over Bervie.*

*Already 3439 viewings of our facebook page this week which is great, but what we'd really like to see is more boots on the ground and willing hands to get Bervie ready for Monday morning's assessment. Lots of simple jobs needing done by folk of all ages and abilities, so please turn-out and do your bit to make Bervie Brighter - the eyes of the nation will be on you”*

Its Wednesday, another sunny morning and 5 get-up-and-goes until Adrian & Sandy, the Beautiful Scotland judges, cast their critical eyes over Bervie. Already 3439 viewings of our Facebook page this week which is great, but what we'd really like to see is more boots on the ground and willing hands to get Bervie ready for Monday morning's assessment. Lots of simple jobs needing done by folk of all ages and abilities, so please turn-out and do your bit to make Bervie Brighter - the eyes of the nation will be on you.

And I wonder if Tom recognises this one

When I first came across this I was momentarily flattered upon reading that I was a 'Beautiful' Scotland Judge!

But it's the last line that worries me

“the eyes of the nation will be on you”



Perhaps after all I was more like this

Especially as during the award ceremony I was asked 'Do you play poker?'

And another group felt down-hearted as 'we didn't give much away' in our expressions

I think I managed to leave Inverbervie however having dispelled any thoughts that we were ogres and that we are in fact quite ordinary.

And despite my mother telling my older brother that I was found under the gooseberry bush I certainly originated as one of these



No photo permissions were required for this one, as that, believe it or not is actually me.

Rather ironically this was a tabloid advert for smokeless fuel from the National Coal Board.

For today I was tempted to add some Beautiful Scotland values - perhaps adding the words clean, environmentally friendly and sustainable.

Clearly Health and safety concerns were not an issue back in 1965!

Back to judging

## 3 Core Pillars

- Horticultural Achievement 50%
- Environmental Responsibility 25%
- Community Participation 25%

Beautiful Scotland entrants are assessed on 3 core pillars

Horticultural Achievement 50%

Environmental Responsibility 25%

Community Participation 25%

Horticulture is still the biggest part of the assessment so there will always be one judge with expertise in this area

Unfortunately Tom - you ended up with 2!

Each of these is sub-divided into 5 -

So that's 15 separate areas although there is much over-lap as you will see. Let's look at one.

## **B1. Conservation and Biodiversity**

### **10 points: 5%**

#### **Wildlife areas and natural habitats**

Is the group involved in:

- Preserving and maintaining these areas?
- Activities to educate the community and encourage them to visit these areas?
- Activities or plans to re-introduce or restore these areas where they have disappeared or been damaged?

This is the first of 5 areas of evaluation within the Environmental Responsibility Section

Brighter Bervie excelled in this area with all the work they are doing in the Bervie Water and the surrounding Bay area.

But they also scored in this area with their pollinator friendly planting in the Voyage of Life Garden as well as the wild-flower area at the sea-front

## **Horticulture (Section A)**

Colours and Design  
Appropriate Choice of plants  
Special Features  
Cultivation and maintenance  
Quality of plants  
Sustainability

Residential Gardens  
Business areas and premises  
Green spaces

Half of the marks are awarded here and sadly it's a topic too large for me to cover in this presentation so I'll ask you to think about this. I am often asked how we judge one village against the next - well we don't - because it's not possible.

Consider 3 identical Summer hanging baskets in 3 of the villages I visited this year.

Forth in Lanarkshire at nearly 1000 ft up, hardly any trees, wind often blowing a hooly - baskets will hang at 45 degrees and trailing plants get shredded.

Ceres in Fife - nestled in a valley and prone to late frosts

Inverbervie on the Aberdeenshire coast with occasional blasts from the East and salt air.

The baskets would have to be different This is about choosing and working with the appropriate plants for the conditions you have.  
So to Inverbervie



We start our tour In the Voyage of Life Garden with a press call. Immediately note: Large number of people - all age groups

We had an MSP, an MP, 2 councillors and a representative from the Scottish Invasive Species Initiative (SISI) - more of that in a bit - as well as a teacher from the local school and a number of the volunteers.

YOYP was this year's theme - lots of youngsters - although surprisingly I thought the Child-catcher was alive and well in some communities I visited - not in this one! 3 P3 students from the school, Oscar at 17 attending the Mearns academy and Michael in his early 20's who is one of the group's volunteers. Even the youngest members got their hands dirty! Whether it be bulb planting with older members of the community at Day Care or work in the school garden.

Superb - to have this number of representatives was impressive - you do need to shout about it and get them down - you absolutely deserve it - so this was great to see them all getting involved. Uncle Tom Campbell rather than Uncle Tom Cobley and all.

# Year of Young People

Mearns Academy



The young gentleman in this shot is Oscar who attends the Mearns academy, a 6th form student and 1 of 3 who were coming to help the Brighter Bervie group on a regular basis between February and July this year.

This was part of the horticultural course they were studying at the time. Oscar is shown here holding his certificate from Brighter Bervie listing the skills he has attained during his time with them.

For those of you in any doubt - Oscar is on the right.

The dashing fellow - only slightly less youthful - on the left is my fellow and senior judging partner.

This is Sandy Scott, Parks and Countryside Manager for Aberdeen City Council. He is an experienced judge of many years and also does assessments for Green Flag status.

He has been a superb mentor and I have been very lucky to work with him over the last 2 years



Judges like  
cake!



Having praised him up - I think I can afford this.

I was so tempted to put on this slide 'That's lovely - but what are you having'

Rather unfair as I've always got the camera.

I should tell you at this stage that the senior judge always carries a special device known throughout judging circles as the Sconometer.

This device is able to differentiate between home-made and shop-bought at 50 paces.

I hasten to say we were very well looked after at Inverbervie!



## Voyage of Life Garden

Converted from scrap ground. So much to say on this and I know Tom has already given you a great overview. There's a gravel and scree area with Mediterranean style and rockery plants representing a coastal scheme. There's a heather bed, a pollinators bed and plenty of permanent planting with trees and shrubs.

Nautical heritage: lobster pot, net, ropes, driftwood, mooring chains, slipway and the design of the area leading to the lighthouse representing waves on the rocks and the hazardous journey ahead. And lots more. The light house was a commission for local sculptor Debbie Ryan who has further works within the village. The main seating area has been used for community gatherings and lessons and is constructed from re-cycled plastic - a second seating area is under a pergola made and donated by local tradesmen and is now a support for climbing plants.

Regular bloom group maintenance parties keep the area in tip-top condition and McPhie Ltd of Glenbervie also supply a team of volunteers to help.

Lots of plus points.



## Horticulture and Heritage

A functional but rather drab car park and recycling area had a major make-over and now looks like this

The design of the planters pays homage to the fact that this the site of the old Railway Station

They are made from re-cycled plastic

Trucks have help-yourself vegetables

Engines have seating as a play attraction

The selection of grasses is appropriate for wind and salt

And the whole area was re-graveled

## Heritage and Horticulture



The Inverbervie Heritage Trail includes amongst others:

The Cutty Sark Memorial garden with a commemorative plaque to its designer Hercules Linton

Queen Joanna's emblem, another new mosaic - the white rose being copied into the planting design with white roses and 5 yellows included

And it's maintained and cared for by a local resident



Art-work in the landscape

The shore here was the landing point of King David II and Joanna to reclaim the Scottish throne in 1341

There is a nautical theme on the seaward side and the rear has landward themes of trees and agriculture etc.

The small blue circles are glass tiles each containing an item contributed by the community before being included in the mosaic

Interesting to note that hair styles have changed little in 700 years



## The Haugh Mills - Work in Progress

Site of the first flax mill in Scotland.

Later processing jute that went to Dundee and then to Kirkcaldy for the manufacture of linoleum

This was a mock-up of the new information boards

It's important to stress that we do expect to see work in progress and not everything 100% finished!



Getting your experts involved for the tour: At this point of the tour we were handed over to the gentleman on the left of the slide, Mark Purmann-Charles, Project Officer for SISI - the Scottish Invasive Species Initiative - a new 4 year project set up within Scottish National Heritage and covering most of North and North-east Scotland.

Invasive species including Himalayan Balsam, Japanese Knotweed and American Mink are being tackled in the Bervie water and surrounding Bay. Co-ordinated and guided by Mark Inverbervie was the first community in Scotland to take advantage of this new resource. Balsam clearance days have been a regular community event for all ages and abilities. The Angling club, Brighter Bervie and SHARK - the volunteer group from neighbouring Johnshaven have all been involved. For the Japanese Knotweed, two members of the community are undergoing training through SISI in order for them to be certificated to apply the chemicals that are currently the only method of tackling this problem

So this is Mark holding court as the expert in this area although I don't know how he managed the entire 2 hour tour in Wellington Boots.

## Overcoming adversity

- RHS award
- Co-ordinated with Scottish Invasive Species Initiative (SISI)
- Wider community involvement



So impressed were we with the efforts the community had already made we nominated them for the Judges Discretionary award for 'Overcoming Adversity'

- they received majority backing from our other judges and went forward to receive this award at the ceremony in Haddington.

This is Tom and Mary from Brighter Bervie along with Mark from SISI having just received the first of their 2 awards

- all enjoying a glass of lemonade



This is the Scottish Invasive Species Initiative logo to look out for

We are lucky to have Mark with us today and you will have the opportunity to seek his help and advice at lunch time - I know he will be pleased to answer any questions.

So, Mark, please raise your hand so we can all see you.



And here they are receiving the discretionary award at the ceremony in September.

Well done to Tom and Brighter Bervie on your two awards.

Heritage you have in Spades, you can be justly proud of your investment in and promotion of these areas as they are a great foundation.

Horticulture you have already proved more than capable of tackling, with a host of young people coming through and an opportunity for learning.

But most of all, I left Inverbervie with an over-whelming sense of community and I think because you have that, the rest will follow.

And that goes to our wider audience - please keep on doing the things you do to improve our communities

- I for one, am personally always left humbled by your hard work and enthusiasm.

Tom Campbell - Brighter Bervie

Mark Purrmann-Charles  
Project Officer  
Scottish Invasive Species Initiative (SISI)

Adrian Miles  
Volunteer Judge for Keep Scotland  
Beautiful

I'll finish with a comment from one of our entrants at the Award Ceremony, who was, as she put it, in awe of what other communities were doing, and quite reflectively said to me

“I've realised it's not just about the flowers or neat-and-tidy - it's about community”

Please come and see Tom, Mark and myself at the stands in the lunch break and thank you all for listening.