

Along with the guidance provided in the standard' mark sheet, our Beautiful Scotland judges got together and came up with the following things to think about for each pillar and subsections. Use it like an aide memoire - these are things you might wish to consider but you do not have to be doing them all, especially if they are not relevant to your community.

Most importantly we want you to enjoy the whole experience.

A – Horticulture

A1: Overall impression

- Think about themes
- Planting design - is it appropriate to the area? Is design used in context to its surroundings?
- Consider all spaces e.g. community garden; residential gardening; business participation; communal areas.

A2: Maintenance of planted areas

- Think about standards and attention to detail
- Local authority input (if relevant) e.g. do you have a relationship with your local parks' manager?
- Demonstrate knowledge base on horticultural/gardening practice.

A3: Plant selection

- Are the plants appropriate to growing conditions; location; the group's workload?
- Right plant, right place
- Sustainability and balance – a good balance of seasonal and perennial planting
- Longer term planting
- Input into housing etc. developments (if relevant)
- Biodiversity considerations
- You might like to think about adaptation and resilience for climate change e.g. drought tolerant plants
- Include photos of winter planting to show year-round activity.

A4: Plant quality

- Plant health – evidence of pest management
- Plant sources: need to consider carbon footprint; use of local suppliers – are plants hardened off properly?

B – Environment

B1: Local identity and pride of place

- What makes your place special?
- This is about how you display/interpret local history and heritage e.g. through public art; highlighting notable architecture/landmarks; heritage trails etc.
- Standard of hard landscaping (includes bus shelters): ties in with detritus levels
- Explain why grass verges for example are not cut/less managed – good for biodiversity
- Include information on Green Flag Award areas/Beach Awards (if relevant)
- Vacant premises – improvement of windows e.g. through a poster competition

B2: Natural environment

- There is a difference between cornfield annuals/perennial wildflower areas. Understanding habitats in relation to wildflower management (you don't necessarily need to know this – find an expert in your community e.g. local ranger)
- If you're working on an invasive species project e.g. removal of Himalayan balsam, highlight this to the judges
- Planting/maintenance initiatives in woodland/pond/wetland areas
- School nature areas
- Community orchards/allotment growing spaces e.g. bee initiatives, leaving wild bits
- Evidence of understanding of conservation measures – not just putting out a bug hotel with no thought behind use/monitoring/appropriateness. Can do this through involvement with biodiversity groups and in recording and monitoring initiatives (children love getting involved in seeing what's using bug hotels/log piles etc.).

B3: Environmental quality and resources

- Demonstrate all areas of recycling e.g. community upcycling/composting/recycling of plants
- Evidence of minimised demand on natural resources e.g. water
- Evidence of minimised use of pesticides, chemicals etc.
- Campaigns to reduce litter/dog fouling etc.

C – Community

As well as in your group's portfolio, include photos in your presentation and you can show photos on your tour e.g. before and after photos; children's photo book etc.

C1: Year-round activity and future commitment

- Not just about the judging day, it's about activities through the year
- Evidenced through the portfolio/on the day through display boards/informing the judges as you go around on the tour (before and after photographs are excellent evidence)
- You could create a calendar of events
- Show any work in progress and 'what's next'.

C2: Communication, education and awareness

- It's about how you interact with everyone in your area
- 'all sections of the community' – could include school and youth groups; faith groups; senior citizens; therapeutic horticultural groups; community payback teams; Med's Shed; Uniform groups etc.
- Show press cuttings and social media
- Evidence talks, especially with other 'bloom' groups
- Evidence partnership working
- Evidence work with young people and work across the ages i.e. intergenerational working
- Anything you're doing locally, regionally, nationally to promote your work
- How are you 'selling' your entry in your community?

C3: Support and funding

- All about how sustainable your activities are; how you fund yourselves
- Include examples of e.g. free seeds; plant sales
- Grant funding e.g. Tesco Bags of Help
- Fundraising events
- Impact of initiative – what difference does this make?
- Evidence all partners including local business involvement; community payback involvement

- Tie into national strategies e.g. for funding opportunities
- In-kind support including putting a value on volunteer hours
- Any NHS 'funding' e.g. green prescriptions