

Showcasing your community to your Beautiful Scotland judges

Your group has three great opportunities to showcase your, and your community's, achievements under the Beautiful Scotland three [pillars](#), to your judges.

These are:

- [Your year-round diary](#) (previously called your portfolio);
- [Your presentation](#); and
- [Your tour](#).

Below you'll find useful guidance on how to maximise the impact of each of these. If you'd like help with these at any time, please drop us an [email](#).

Showcase opportunity 1 - your year-round diary (previously called your portfolio)

Think of this like a tourist brochure or like a diary showing what goes on across your community through the year 😊. It's not only useful for your Beautiful Scotland entry, but you can use it to promote your work to others, as evidence in funding bids, etc.

The year-round diary itself isn't marked, so it really doesn't matter what it looks like, BUT the content helps the judges when they are marking and allocating scores – so make sure your document evidences all of the [marking criteria](#) (for Business Improvement District (BID) entrants, click [here](#) for your marking criteria)

The year-round diary helps your judges to form a picture of your community and the activities that go on through the year, before they visit, and can also give them information about things they won't have time to see on your tour.

It should cover the activities going on across your community from August the year before, until the first week in July when you submit it.

We have two good examples on our website to give you some ideas: [example one](#); [example two](#).

Why not ask a senior school, college, or youth group to assist with the design of your portfolio as part of a project?

Layout

10 sides of A4 plus appendices, or 30 sides of A4 (including appendices), is recommended, with a suggested layout as follows (feel free to use fewer pages):

- Page 1 – Introduction to your group/community
- Page 2, 3 & 4 – Horticultural achievement (divide into the seasons)
- Page 5 & 6 – Environmental responsibility (divide into the seasons)
- Page 7 & 8 – Community participation (divide into the seasons)
- Page 9 – Finance (how you manage to fund your activities)
- Page 10 – Plans for the future Although you may have plans, please don't feel you always have to do more. Maintaining what you currently achieve can be enough.

- Appendices – links to online newspaper articles*** etc. please keep appendices relevant and to a minimum.

***Due to copyright issues, please do not include newspaper clippings.

Rather than lots of text, bullet points and photos are absolutely fine – remember, your judges may have a number of year-round diaries to read. We recommend a minimum font size of 11, and please include dates with your photos (if you've been working on a project for a number of years, including before and after photos is absolutely fine). Check out our [guide to taking good photos](#). If you use photographs that include people, their permission must be obtained as the document will be used publicly on our Beautiful Scotland web pages.

Sending us your year-round diary

We'll email you the deadline date. Please ensure you email your document before the deadline to ensure your judging pair has time to read it before their visit. If the file size of your document is over 10MB, you can reduce the size using the free service on this website: <https://smallpdf.com/compress-pdf> or send it to us using the free file transfer service available at www.wetransfer.com.

Showcase opportunity 2 – your presentation

During your judges visit, you have the opportunity to give a 15-minute presentation. We recommend doing this when they arrive, before your tour starts, as it is a great way to set the scene.

Like the year-round diary, the quality of your presentation is not marked (it's the content that helps your judges allocate marks), so it really doesn't matter what format you wish to use – you could chat to your judges while looking through a scrapbook, have display boards, give a powerpoint presentation or show a video you have made, or invite groups/representatives from your community to speak – it's whatever works best for you.

The presentation should focus primarily on giving an overview of your community and year-round working, taking your judges through the year and showing them the variety of activities in which you've been involved, from bulb planting days to community meetings, to school projects. It's also a great opportunity to show projects/groups which your judges won't visit/meet on the tour. It can include images of recent work that couldn't be included in your year-round diary, and is an opportunity to highlight fundraising events, any future plans and work with other groups in your area. Make sure to showcase any discretionary awards you have submitted nominations for.

Showcase opportunity 3 – your tour

This is when you get to take your judges around your community, highlighting your incredible projects...top tip – start with a wow and end with a wow!

Tour times

Each category has its own tour time (see table below), but feel free to shorten this if you don't need the full amount – just let your judges know in advance. Also, please don't worry if you overrun a little – up to 10 minutes is fine:

Category	Electoral roll figure	TOUR	Press / photo shoot	Presentation	Total
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Wee Village	Up to 300	1 hour	15 mins	15 mins	1 hour 30 mins
Small Village	301-1,000	1 hour 15 mins	15 mins	15 mins	1 hour 45 mins
Large Village	1,001-2,500	1 hour 30 mins	15 mins	15 mins	2 hours
Coastal Village	Up to 2,500	1 hour 30 mins	15 mins	15 mins	2 hours
Coastal Town	2,501-35,000	2 hours 30 mins	15 mins	15 mins	3 hours
Urban Community	1,001-12,000	2 hours 30 mins	15 mins	15 mins	3 hours
Small Town	2,501-6,000	2 hours	15 mins	15 mins	2 hours 30 mins
Medium Town	6,001-12,000	2 hours 30 mins	15 mins	15 mins	3 hours
Large Town	12,001-35,000	3 hours	15 mins	15 mins	**3 hours 30 mins plus break
Small City	35,001-100,000	3 hours 30 mins	15 mins	15 mins	**4 hours plus break
City	100,001 and over	4 hours	15 mins	15 mins	**4 hours 30 mins plus break
Residential Community	N/A	1 hour	15 mins	15 mins	1 hour 30 mins
Business Improvement District (BID)	N/A	2 hours	15 mins	15 mins	2 hours 30 mins
Town Centre & City Centre	N/A	2 hours	15 mins	15 mins	2 hours 30 mins

**For Large Town, Small City and City categories, you may add in a break in the middle of your tour (please discuss this with your judges in advance). This allows you and your judges to have a refreshment/comfort stop - the 'tour clock' will be stopped during this time.

Top tips for a good tour

Here are our top tips to ensure your tour showcases your community at its best and is enjoyable for everyone involved:

- **Read the [mark sheet and criteria](#)** (for BID entries - [BID entrants mark sheet and criteria](#)): think about what you can show the judges to cover as many of the criteria as you can; concentrate on showing the judges things that have been a result of your activities, or that you have been involved in/with/support, or who support your work.
- **Meeting people:** be sure to highlight the involvement of your community at all times. For example, don't just show your wildflower meadow – invite some of the people who helped sow or plant it to talk about it. Can you meet e.g. the lead for the community garden, children involved in a gardening club, residents of the care home involved in their garden, your local ranger to talk about a nature reserve, members of the business community etc. If you work with It's Your Neighbourhood groups, or other Beautiful Scotland groups, consider including them too – always check that the groups are happy

with this. If children/people aren't available on judging day, can they e.g. make a little video which you can showcase?

- **Not everything on your route is marked:** You want to impress your judges and show them key areas/projects you are particularly proud of. Sometimes this means taking your judges through areas you are not as proud of as they present challenges. If this is the case, you might want to consider telling your judges more about them. For example, you might be able to highlight work you have undertaken to reduce littering or to fill a vacant space. Perhaps you have been working with partners to change policy or develop new strategies to manage challenges in particular areas/spaces.
- **Evidence year-round activity:** e.g. if you're visiting a community garden, show photos of what it looks like at different times through the year, including people planting/spring tidy-up etc.
- **Private/residential gardens:** as long as these are visible from a public road/path, if you have a couple of exemplar gardens in your community, do show them to the judges (and get them to meet the owner(s)).
- **Turn negatives into positives:** e.g. if you have experienced local authority cuts in your area, tell your judges what steps you've made to work with the council, or what your group is doing to help with this. For example, outline any partnership working or how you've turned e.g. a grass area that used to be cut by the council into a wildflower area.
- **Be realistic with your timings:** your judges may ask questions, take photos, there may be traffic jams, all of which could take you over your planned times. Don't try and squeeze too much in – is it better to show something in your presentation rather than rushing to take your judges there? Don't show your judges lots of the same thing. If it takes a long time to get to a particular site, is it better to bring a representative from that project to meet the judges to talk/show photos/a video.
- **Identify a meeting point:** this could be a village hall, a community garden etc., but do make sure there is access to a toilet. This could also be the place you give your 15 minute presentation. Please ensure you're able to offer your judges a comfort break before you start.
- **Community notice boards:** make sure these are up to date and include information about your work, where relevant.
- **Accompanying the judges round the tour:** We recommend you keep this to perhaps 2 people, meeting others along the way.
- **15-minute press/photo shoot:** this is your opportunity to invite local press/get everyone together for a photo at a particular location of your choosing. Articles and photographs in the local press help towards building your profile. Your judges are happy to answer questions and be photographed, however, try to keep your press/photo shoot to one location. Best advice – have someone from your group with a camera, ready to take a photo, which you can then send to your local press if they are unable to attend.
- **Refreshments:** this is completely optional, but if you would like to offer your judges a cuppa before you start, or lunch at the end, please check with them in advance that they have time to do this.
- **Display boards:** again, completely optional, but you can use these at the start/during/over a comfort break/end of your tour, perhaps displayed by local groups, to highlight projects/allow your judges to meet other community representatives.
- **Discretionary Awards:** if you submitted any nominations, make sure to bring your judges attention to these – your judges could be influential in supporting your nomination.
- **Self-assessment exercise:** do this a number of times through the year - take a critical friend around your route and take on board their suggestions. Go through the mark sheet and criteria and score your route, seeing it through 'a judges' eyes' – are there lower scoring areas/are you missing anything? How could you improve these? Carry out

a full rehearsal if possible and ensure that everyone knows that their time may be cut short and not to be offended if this happens.

- **Route map and judging itinerary:** These simple documents are a great way to clearly show your judging route and what your judges will see/who they will meet on the way. The judges' itinerary is also a useful document for your judges to make notes against as they go round, and for you to keep everyone on track on the day. A top tip...don't include timings in the itinerary you give your judges, rather, just provide a running order...that way you won't get too stressed if one element runs over its allotted time. There are some good examples of route maps and judging itineraries in our online [Support and Resources](#) section. Please [email](#) your documents to us in advance so we can pass these on to your judges, or make sure to give them to your judges on the day.

And finally...

- **Mobile numbers:** make sure you have a number for one of your judges, and they have yours in case of any issues in the run up to or on the day.
- **Last minute checks:** you could organise for a few people to check there is no litter/dog fouling on the judging route before your tour begins, and could have a front runner during your tour to let your tour guides know if e.g. a road has suddenly been blocked.
- **Start time:** make it clear when your tour commences, so that the judges are aware – they will only start judging when you tell them you have started.
- **Looking after your judges:** our experienced judges are volunteers who give up their time and expertise to support you and your community - they see it is a real privilege to visit and always enjoy meeting and chatting to people. They are in your hands on the day, and you are in charge of the 'tour clock', so if you need to move on to the next site, don't be afraid to tell them. Please don't give them lots of documents when they arrive/during the tour/when they leave (remember, they will already have a copy of your year round diary) – they may be judging a number of groups and have long distances to travel.
- **Celebrate:** after your judges have left, invite everyone involved together to celebrate all their hard work 😊

Most importantly, your judging tour is your day, and should be fun and a celebration of everything you are achieving in your community.