



The Hills Group - CPRE Wiltshire Best Kept Village Competition 2018

This year's CPRE Wiltshire Best Kept Village Competition has been sponsored by The Hills Group for a sixth consecutive year, and judging is now complete. The first round of the competition saw the expert judging teams from the Wiltshire Branch of the Campaign to Protect Rural England putting each village under the microscope. Thirty six villages throughout the county were tested against the competition criteria which look for tidiness, cleanliness, presentation and village community spirit. The Parish Councils and their volunteers had clearly been hard at work, achieving encouragingly high standards and making the judges' task that much more difficult. Each village is judged within the categories of 'Small', 'Medium' and 'Large' and in the first round they are only judged within their own district: West Wiltshire, North Wiltshire, South Wiltshire and Kennet (East Wiltshire).

The winning villages in each district were then judged against each other in the County Round, using fresh judging teams including individual judges from Wiltshire Council. The final results were:

| Large Village | | | Medium Village | | | Small Village | | |
|-----------------|--------------|--------|-----------------|------------|--------|-----------------|-------------|--------|
| 1 st | Hullavington | 85 pts | 1 st | Biddestone | 90 pts | 1 st | Charlton | 82 pts |
| 2 nd | Whiteparish | 82 pts | 2 nd | Edington | 86 pts | 2 nd | Ansty | 80 pts |
| 3 rd | Ramsbury | 81 pts | 3 rd | Seend | 85 pts | 3 rd | Wilcot | 78 pts |
| 4 th | Winsley | 76 pts | 4 th | Hindon | 75 pts | 4 th | Bishopstrow | 70 pts |

A quote from one of the judging teams reflects just how high the standard of this year's competition was:

"We were impressed with the lack of litter and fly posting in the villages showing a strong sense of pride in the local area. It was a pleasure to visit all the villages. All villages were all maintained to such an impressive standard it was very difficult to separate them."

Hullavington obviously made a big effort to win the Large Village category this year, as in recent years they have been at best third in the North Wiltshire Large Village category. Amongst their comments, the judges felt that Hullavington "was immaculately presented, everything was clean and tidy, verges well mown and looked after. it was a pleasure to see so many gardens neat and colourful and evidently cared for. There was a noticeable absence of litter, and the surroundings of the Hullavington Arms, the shop and the garage (very discreet) were very tidy and attractive."

Biddestone have not always entered the competition in recent years but this year they convincingly won the Medium Village category. The judges "were immediately drawn to how completely immaculate the village was, not one piece of litter, all the verges trimmed beautifully, every garden and flower basket offering a kaleidoscope of colour. The residents should take great pride in the efforts they made."

Charlton have not quite qualified for the County Round in recent years but this year they won the Small Village round in North Wiltshire and then just pipped Ansty to win in the County Round. The Judges felt that Charlton "exuded an air of quiet pride in every aspect. The hedges and verges were neat and well-tended as were the frontage of the pub and the church yard..... The Blue Crescent space was well looked after and it was good to see the football goalposts which indicated it was often put to use. The Village Hall, Play Area, Cricket Pitch and Pavilion are a credit to the village and the War memorial is well cared for."

Each winning village will be presented with, and keep for a year, an eight foot standard with mounted shield, usually emplaced on their village green. Award ceremonies will be held sequentially at the three winning villages on Sunday 23rd September when CPRE Wiltshire's President, the Lord-Lieutenant for Wiltshire, Mrs Sarah Troughton, will pull away the Union Flag surmounting the shield; commemorative plaques will be presented by both Mr Michael Hill, chief executive of The Hills Group, and by a senior member of Wiltshire Council. Cash prizes and framed certificates will be awarded to: each winning village and to 2nd, 3rd and 4th placed villages; and also to the Best Newcomer and Merit Award winners. All villages in the County Round will receive an additional framed certificate for coming top of their district in the First Round.

Laurence Kitching Award - Sponsored by Princeton Homes

The winning six villages from 2017 and 2016 were, as dictated by our rules, not allowed to compete in the main competition but were invited to enter the Laurence Kitching Award, sponsored by Princeton Homes and often called the 'Winner of Winners' competition. The results were:

1st All Cannings 2nd = Tollard Royal 2nd = Rushall

The judges' overall impression of All Cannings was of "a very well maintained place with an involved and caring community. The many facilities that the village had to offer all require care from the community and this is evidently done extremely well".

The award (a cash prize and a plaque) will be presented to All Cannings during the Presentation Day on 23rd September.

Newcomers Award

For the fourth year running an award has been made available to encourage villages which have not entered the Best Kept Village Competition for the previous five years to give it a go. It comes with a £150 cash prize and a certificate. CPRE Wiltshire hopes it will encourage even more villages to enter in 2019. This year only one such village qualified to enter.

This year's winner is Send, considered by the judges to be "a delightful Wiltshire village with a strong sense of identity and community".

Merit Prize for Consistent Effort

A prize, awarded for the fourth time this year, is awarded to the village that has been most consistently successful in the past four years but has not won a main competition prize or the Laurence Kitching Award this year. In 2018 this has been won by Bishopstrow, who have been 1st in the West Wiltshire Small Village competition in each of the past four years.

Making the Competition Work

Finally it is important to point out that this competition could not take place without the very generous contributions of our sponsors, the support of Wiltshire Council and of course the immense hard work put in by individual parish councils and villagers. It is a joint effort but one we feel benefits Wiltshire and in particular the participating villages.

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Editors are requested to ensure that both of the sponsors (The Hills Group and Princeton Homes) and CPRE Wiltshire are mentioned in their copy.

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