

Thames and Chilterns in Bloom - Hints and Tips for Successful Judging Tours

GENERAL POINTS

Judging dates are not set in stone. If you want to avoid a particular week / day please let us know when you enter. If the date provided is not suitable again let us know and we will try and change it.

- Please let us have some (digital) seasonal photographs of all your hard work – they are really useful for the annual awards ceremony and for our website.

PLANNING THE TOUR

Unless you are a new entrant, at least one of the judges is likely to have visited you before. However, you should still treat it as a new tour, we can only judge what we are shown on the day.

- The guidelines are aimed at national finalists so take note but don't let them scare you off! The important thing is to remember the 3 core pillars of Britain in Bloom
 - Horticultural achievement (40%)
 - Environmental responsibility (30%)
 - Community participation (30%)
- Look at the marking sheet and try and include something for every section on the tour. The sheet includes examples of what could be relevant for each section, but you are not expected to have or show everything listed, and you may well have relevant areas which are not!
- Note the time allowed for your category, and plan your tour accordingly. An additional 15 minutes is allowed for meeting press/media representatives, but this is not compulsory.
- The community participation section mentions a presentation. This is not compulsory or necessary for regional entries, and you will not be penalised for not doing this, but another additional 15 minutes is available.
- Portfolios (no more than 15 sheets at A4 size) are a useful way of showing the judges evidence of all year round relevant activities which cannot be displayed on the day, for example spring bulb planting, and this will be taken into account. However, these are not compulsory and you will not be penalised for not having a portfolio. You could consider displaying photos / information on boards during a refreshment break or at another point on the tour, but again this is not essential.
- Details of the meeting point, itinerary and contact telephone number (for judging day) should be sent to the judges seven days before the judging date. Please let the judges know in advance of any arrangements for refreshments or lunch (note that this is not essential). Parking details are helpful.

JUDGING DAY

Apart from an updated itinerary / map (if necessary), don't give the judges too much to carry around – save it until the end of the tour as they won't have time to look at it during the tour anyway.

- Two escorts, and a driver if required, is generally enough to accompany the judges. Do make sure those on the tour are best placed to answer questions on all aspects of the local bloom. We love to meet all the people involved but they can be met at appropriate points during the tour. You can waste an awful lot of time getting lots of people in and out of vehicles!
- The judges may have travelled a long way and will appreciate a comfort break before the tour starts.
- Make sure you have umbrellas and water available.
- Please let the judges know if you want to be put forward for a specific regional award. The judges can put you forward anyway, but it helps if we know that you are aiming for a particular award.
- The judges like to make some notes as soon as possible after the tour. If you are able to provide a quiet spot for them to do this it is very helpful, but not essential.