

Market Harborough in Bloom Volunteers

Annual report for HDC VCS Scrutiny committee March 2020

Introduction

Market Harborough in Bloom Volunteers is a not for profit organisation that has been actively involved in improving the environment of Market Harborough since the group was formed in 1996. We are an entirely voluntary organisation that works all year round on gardening projects with other community groups with an objective of making the town look better for residents and visitors. The group is organised by a small management committee all of whom are MHiBV volunteers.

Included in our constitution objectives is representing Market Harborough town in the East Midlands regional competition of Britain in Bloom, annually. This competition is judged in July and comprises three elements: Horticultural Achievement, Environmental Responsibility and Community Participation.

As well as the rose garden in Welland Park, the volunteers plant and maintain circa 100 planting locations across the town, ranging from planters in the town centre, to wildflower meadows at the railway station and opposite the police station.

2019 outcomes

The main outcome upon which we judge ourselves is the annual East Midlands in Bloom (EMiB) competition. We compete in the Large Town category alongside 11 other towns and in 2019 we successfully achieved our 9th consecutive Gold medal and finished 2nd in our category. The table below shows our performance over the last 3 years

	2017	2018	2019
A. Horticultural Achievement	93/100	89	92
B. Environmental Responsibility	40/50	44	44
C. Community Participation	41/50	46	46
Total points	174/200	179	182
Award	GOLD	GOLD	GOLD

In 2018, we were also awarded the Horticultural Excellence in Parks award, the Least Littered Environment award and a special judges award for the installation and maintenance of the red phone box on the High St.

Our most important resource is our volunteers who work all year round, in all weathers. The number of volunteers has increased slightly since 2016 from 25 to 29 and the number of hours worked per volunteer has also increased. Some volunteers drop in occasionally to support specific tasks; other volunteers commit many hours per week. Many now support working on Wednesday mornings in addition to our core Monday morning working.

Our volunteer ages range from 19 – 82 years including some living with long-term physical and mental health challenges. All our volunteers benefit from regular physical activity in the open air, enjoy the social aspect of volunteering and working with others towards a common goal.

The table below shows the increase in volunteers and volunteer hours.

	2017	2018	2019
Number of registered volunteers	27	28	29
Estimated total volunteer hours	3082	3285	3436

We have a website and a Facebook account that enables us to publicise the work we do and to engage with the community. Our target is to post to Facebook twice a week. We now have over 400 followers, with an average of 200 page views for most posts rising to 1400 for EMiB results and other notable events.

In May 2019, we were accepted as a good cause on the Harborough Lotto and have raised £234 to date from the Lotto. We are trying to increase the number of supporters we have through publicising on our website, Facebook and leaflet distribution.

Funding

Our three main sources of funding are the HDC annual grant, planter sponsorships and other grants. Our standard annual outgoings are winter and summer plants, compost and feed, watering and insurance, and these are covered by the HDC grant. We apply for other grants to fund specific projects. All other costs are covered by sponsorships and other income e.g. plant sales. We generally have to incur costs before we receive our income, so we have built up over time a balance to enable us to manage our cash flow.

The tables below show our income and expenditure in the major categories over the last three years.

£	2017		2018		2019	
	Inc.	Exp.	Inc.	Exp.	Inc.	Exp.
Winter plants		1503		1603		1542
Summer plants		2180		1954		2215
Compost/Feed		1074		1295		1086
Watering		2060		2000		2000
Insurance		216		225		225
HDC Grant	7000	7033	7000	7077	7000	7068

£	2017		2018		2019	
	Inc.	Exp.	Inc.	Exp.	Inc.	Exp.
Grants/Projects	4040	4761	4501	6118	6192	5018
Sponsorships	3150		3050		3150	
Other	3619	3648	2636	2414	988	1224
Total	10809	8409	10187	8532	10330	6242

£	2017		2018		2019	
	Inc.	Exp.	Inc.	Exp.	Inc.	Exp.
Grand Total	17809	15442	17187	15609	17330	13310