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he East Midlands is blooming. That was certainly the feeling engendered by the latest East Midlands in Bloom (EMIB) awards which attracted a healthy 50 main competition entries, with Derbyshire entrants Belper, Rosliston and Elmton each winning their categories for the second year running. Announcing its campaign as 'the best in the country', EMIB Chairman and Awards host Jeff Bates said that council cuts have had a 'dispiriting impact' on communities but added that 'there are hopeful stories wherever you find a Bloom group.'

Spirits are certainly high in Rosliston which not only won the Village category with a Gold Medal for the second successive year but also, a fortnight later, earned a Silver Gilt Medal, also for the second year running, as the only Derbyshire entry in the Britain in Bloom National Finals.

Rosliston in Bloom Secretary Caroline Alston said that the EMIB campaign 'helps to bring the



## A Floral FLOURISH



community closer together', with South Derbyshire District Council Leader Bob Wheeler applauding the village for its 'hard work, resolve and passion' which has made Rosliston 'a beautiful place to live, work and visit.' There was further recognition for the village with Rosliston-based Chapman's Nurseries winning the Best Retail/Commercial Premises Award. According to the judges: 'All plants seen at the nursery were just begging to be taken home.'

In the north of the county, another Derbyshire winner was Elmton in the Bolsover District, receiving Silver in the Small Villages category. There was a Gold Medal for Spire Infant School, Chesterfield in winning EMIB's Best School Garden. The school has a remarkable record at EMIB, winning this award in four of the five years it has entered (Spire wasn't allowed to compete last year as it had won in the previous three consecutive years). The EMIB award comes a year after the school won Natural England's Big Wildlife Garden of the Year and follows another award earlier in 2011: the Royal Forestry Society's Excellence in Forestry.

The schoolchildren were commended for growing a wide range of fruit, vegetables, trees, flowers and herbs; for creating a 'Woodland for Wildlife' area; and for forming five gardening clubs. >

# HOW DERBYSHIRE FARED IN EMIB



### Small village

• Silver & Category Winner – Elmton – 'colourful hanging baskets, a beautifully maintained Pinfold and a colourful frontage to the Elm Tree Inn' – with Judges Award for 'the work done in protecting the rare and beautiful Bee Orchids on the Green.'

### Village

• Gold & Category winner – Rosliston – 'tremendous levels of community involvement' – with Judges Award for 'the involvement of young children in environmental initiatives throughout the village'.

• Silver – Middleton by Wirksworth - with Judges Award to the Eco Centre for 'the well designed facility and active programme to train and educate adults in



traditional country skills such as dry stone walling.'

• Silver – Milford – 'impressed by the wellorganised and presented tour' - with a Judges Award for the new Hopping Mill development – 'its design, layout and inclusion of heritage features and the well maintained front gardens.'

### Large village

• Silver – Tansley –
'impressive hanging
baskets and a fantastic
natural area in Tansley
Wood which enhances
one's visit to the village' –



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with Judges Award for Tansley Primary School staff and pupils for 'the continued effort and hard work to develop the school grounds.'

### Small town

• Silver – Bakewell –

'Bakewell Gardening
Association, community orchard
and allotments all very impressive' - with Judges
Award 'for the spectacular display and outstanding
maintenance at Bath Gardens.'



### Town

- Gold & Category Winner BELPER 'very impressed by the heritage bedding theme' with a Judges Award to the residents of Meadow Court for 'the high standard of their gardens and floral displays.'
- Silver Gilt ILKESTON ' forward looking approach to the Bloom' with Judges Award to The Spanish Bar for 'the transformation of the Beer Garden into a well landscaped oasis overflowing with good quality floral displays.'



There was a double celebration in Amber Valley, with Belper repeating last year's Gold Medal as well as winning the Large Town category again, and neighbouring Milford receiving a Silver Medal in the Village category in its first ever year as an EMIB entrant.

Visibly moved when accepting Belper's award, Town Council Leader John Nelson stated that the town's success last year had galvanised the community and that 'winning the award again is such a proud achievement, especially as it's recognition for the whole community. At the same time, we have made Belper





a nicer place for people to live.'

The Blooming Milford Group were hoping to earn at least a Bronze Award as a first-time entrant – most newcomers to EMIB achieve either a Bronze or Certificate of Merit – so it was 'delight and surprise' to receive Silver, said group member John Weaver. Blooming Milford started with 15 villagers responding to a notice placed in the village newsletter. 'We invited anyone interested in improving the looks of the village, mainly in floral terms,' recalls John. 'We planted bulbs,

created a herb garden, erected flower boxes and encouraged several villagers to take part in the Open Gardens Scheme. A lovely touch was dropping a "well done" note through the door of every householder whose front garden had helped improve the look of the village – the EMIB judge noted that. But it's not all about making a place look pretty. There was a great deal of effort involved in "pulling" masses of invasive balsam and generally making the village tidier and cleaner, which is one aspect that East Midlands in



Bloom makes you focus on.' John said he would encourage any town or village to enter East Midlands in Bloom but warned that the work is exhaustive: 'You have to present a portfolio of 12 months of activity; community groups and individual villagers need to support and sponsor projects; you have to establish a good relationship with your local councils - and, in doing so, you realise how helpful they can be; and you have to plan a route for the judges and then plan thoroughly for the judging day. We're thrilled with the Silver but know we have to work even harder for the Gold. Whatever the future, Milford is a brighter, better and more colourful place.'

EMIB Chairman Jeff Bates says he would welcome more first-time entrants as well as the return of several which have lapsed. 'Taking part is just as important as winning,' says Jeff. 'Entering gives you a valuable opportunity to look at your local environment and how it can be improved, not just through floral displays but by addressing issues like sustainability, recycling, conservation, minimising waste and dealing with litter. It encourages voluntary work, stimulates your community and increases pride in one's place. Britain in Bloom is a grand vision which has stood the test of time.'

East Midlands in Bloom is appealing for a new sponsor in 2012 as Derbyshire Building Society bows out after 16 years as main sponsor.



- Silver Gilt LONG EATON 'presentation of highways was excellent, as was the floral impact at The Green' with Judges Award for 'the restoration of Long Eaton Cemetery Chapel, the approach roads, avenue and entrance gates.'
- Silver MATLOCK 'particularly impressed by the colourful floral displays in the town centre and centenary bedding in Hall Leys Park' – with Judges Award for ' the



commendable Friends of Matlock Railway Station adoption scheme.'

### **Urban community**

• Silver – LITTLEOVER – 'numerous improvements achieved by an enthusiastic Bloom group' – with a Judges Award for 'the successful Shop Fronts competition run as part of the Bloom entry.'



### Small city

• Silver Gilt – CHESTERFIELD – 'Taplow Park and the Crematorium Gardens were great strengths with impressive work by schoolchildren in designing banners for lamp columns' – with Judges Award for 'refurbishing the sensory garden at Holmebrook Country Park.'

### Its your neighbourhood

• Level 5 Outstanding Award – FRIENDS OF CHADDESDEN PARK – 'top of the tree for community involvement, both enthusiastic and self motivated.'



 Level 3 Award – KIRK LANGLEY COMMUNITY

ORCHARD – 'a great example of cross generation activity that has a future spanning decades.'

### Discretionary awards

- Best Retail/Commercial Premises CHAPMAN'S NURSERIES, ROSLISTON
- Best School Garden SPIRE INFANTS SCHOOL, CHESTERFIELD



### Digital photography competition

• Winner, Class A (Reception, Years 1 & 2) - MIA WRAGG, Bakewell C of E Infant School - 'The eye is immediately drawn to the bright, vibrant colours of an image bursting with life. A remarkable sense of composition from a 6 year-old.'

