

# Press Release



## The Hills Group - CPRE Wiltshire Best Kept Village Competition 2019

This year's CPRE Wiltshire Best Kept Village Competition has been sponsored by The Hills Group for a seventh 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 and from Wiltshire Council putting each village under the microscope in May and June. Thirty-nine villages throughout the county were tested against the competition criteria which include tidiness, cleanliness, presentation, conservation and village community spirit. As ever 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).

In July the winning villages in each district were then judged against each other in the County Round, using fresh judging teams. The final results are:

### Large Village

1 <sup>st</sup>	Bratton	97 pts
2 <sup>nd</sup>	Whiteparish	87 pts
3 <sup>rd</sup>	Ashton Keynes	83 pts
4 <sup>th</sup>	Aldbourn	80 pts

### Medium Village

1 <sup>st</sup>	Urchfont	91 pts
2 <sup>nd</sup>	Hindon	89 pts
3 <sup>rd</sup> =	Great Somerford	87 pts
3 <sup>rd</sup> =	Whitley	87 pts

### Small Village

1 <sup>st</sup>	Ansty	88 pts
2 <sup>nd</sup>	Upper and Lower Seagry	87 pts
3 <sup>rd</sup>	Rushall	83 pts
4 <sup>th</sup>	Bishopstrow	80 pts

Quotes from the judging teams reflect just how high the standard of this year's competition was:

"The general appearance of the village, the maintenance of roadside verges, hedges and the appearance of gardens was immaculate, and we were impressed from the start of our visit."

And:

"We were so pleased to have judged a village where there has been so much successful self-help. There was so much that was very good; from the support for the environment, to care of the very young."

Bratton yet again made a big effort to win the Large Village category this year. In recent years they have been first or second in the West Wiltshire Large Village category. Amongst their comments, the judges "were hugely impressed by the overall appearance of all three [Church] areas." They also commented very favourably on the school surrounds, Reeves Orchard, conservation areas, the area around the shop, the war memorial, the village green, footpaths and the village website.

Urchfont began to enter the competition two years ago and have quickly raised their standards to win the Medium Village category. The judges' first impression was "of a village well cared for by the community." Other comments mentioned the beautifully kept gardens, the lack of litter, common land, the areas around The Lamb Inn and the shop, the village hall, the church, the cricket ground, the allotments and the website.

Ansty have been regular entrants in recent years and have usually done very well. This year they got everything right and won the Small Village County Round. The Judges felt that "The general

appearance of the village, the maintenance of roadside verges, hedges and the appearance of gardens was immaculate, and we were impressed from the start of our visit". Other areas that were particularly notable included the Commandery and pond, the churchyard, the website, community spirit, the two business areas, and the farm shop".

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 15<sup>th</sup> 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 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> placed villages and to the Best Newcomer and Merit Award winners. Cash prizes will also be awarded to 4<sup>th</sup> placed villages. All villages who won in the First Round will also receive an framed certificate.

### **Laurence Kitching Award - Sponsored by Princeton Homes**

The winning six villages from 2018 and 2017 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:

1<sup>st</sup> Charlton (near Malmesbury)      2<sup>nd</sup> Mildenhall      3<sup>rd</sup> = Biddestone and Hullavington

The judges' overall impression of Charlton was of "a delightful village and we were so impressed with it that it was hard to find much to criticise". They added: "Altogether an excellent well managed community that has clearly taken trouble and pride in making the village a beautiful and vibrant place". Some of the areas particularly mentioned included: the village hall, the cricket and football field, the children's playground, the pub, notice boards, and the lack of litter.

The award (a cash prize and a plaque) will be presented to Charlton during the Presentation Day on 15<sup>th</sup> September.

### **Newcomers Award – Sponsored by Haine and Smith Opticians**

For the fifth 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 2020. This year three such villages qualified to enter.

The results were:

1<sup>st</sup> Froxfield      2<sup>nd</sup> Tilshead      3<sup>rd</sup> Dilton Marsh

The judges felt that Froxfield "has a pleasing appearance and shows considerable evidence of efforts being made to maintain the quality of the local environment".

### **Merit Prize for Consistent Effort**

A prize, awarded for the fifth time this year, is awarded to the village that has been most consistently successful in the past four years but has not won the Laurence Kitching Award this year, nor the Merit Prize in 2018. In 2019 this has been won by Bratton, who have been 1<sup>st</sup> in the West Wiltshire Large Village competition in all but one 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.

30<sup>th</sup> July 2019

***Editors are requested to ensure that the sponsors (The Hills Group, Princeton Homes and Haine and Smith Opticians) and CPRE Wiltshire are mentioned in their copy.***

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### **Notes to editors:**

Established in 1900 The Hills Group Limited is a privately owned family company with a broad and successful portfolio of business activities which include recycling and waste management; quarrying of aggregates and production of ready-mixed concrete; and building new homes. It is a dynamic regional business which, while centred on Wiltshire, has stretched its boundaries into neighbouring areas. The Group has a turnover of £96 million and employs almost 600 people at 28 sites.

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