

TUNBRIDGE WELLS BOROUGH COUNCIL

**TUNBRIDGE WELLS BOROUGH PARISHES
IN BLOOM SURVEY
2003**

Prepared for

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INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

Tunbridge Wells
BOROUGH COUNCIL
www.tunbridgewells.gov.uk

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The questionnaire

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- All Parish Councils were invited to take part and all responded to the survey.
- Only five Parish Councils (33.3%) entered the competition: Capel, Paddock Wood, Hawkhurst, Cranbrook and Southborough, three of which had entered for the past six years or more.
- All five Parish Councils had won awards.
- Up to 405 people, properties and/or groups were involved in South East In Bloom for these five Parish Councils.
- 'Helps to make the area more attractive to live' and 'encourages people to work together building a community spirit' were the two most cited reasons for taking part in South East In Bloom.
- All five Parish Councils rated South East In Bloom as important.
- All five Parish Councils rated the Borough Council's financial assistance as important.
- 'Conditions of the competition' was the main reason given for not entering the competition, followed by 'Not a priority for the Town / Parish Council in the light of other duties'.

CONCLUSION

- There appears to be a high level of support, involvement and co-operation from various groups within the five Parish areas entering the competition, resulting in a sense of community spirit and winning of awards.
- No light industry or farm businesses were involved in the South East In Bloom Competition.
- All Parish Councils indicated that TWBC's financial assistance is important to their Bloom activities, yet in a previous question, only three Parishes indicated this as a reason for taking part: to qualify for funding.
- Parish Councils felt the 'conditions of the competition' was the main reason why they didn't take part.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Awareness, lack of interest and support appeared to be other issues. Existing marketing and promotion campaigns should continue with the aim of overcoming these obstacles with Parishes in order to entice them to enter in the future.
- Means of encouraging greater support and involvement from local businesses could be considered. A new or improved information pack about the event, what to do, where to purchase flowers, supporting guidance, what the judges are looking for etc. could be an opportunity as these were some of the comments received on how to improve the competition.
- The use of the Bloom newsletter should continue.
- Consideration should be given to reviewing the conditions of the competition and with the aim of identifying what elements are preventing some Parishes from entering the competition.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

In October 2003, the Corporate Marketing and Communications Unit met with Leisure Services to discuss the requirements for conducting a survey to review the Tunbridge Wells Parish in Bloom initiative.

This purpose of this project was to survey Parish Councils about their support for South East In Bloom. The objectives of this survey were to:

- identify Parish participation and entry in the competition
- identify the level of individual involvement
- identify purpose of entry and the importance of Bloom to Parish areas

2.0 METHODOLOGY

The survey was conducted using a postal methodology to all 15 Parish and Town Councils in the borough of Tunbridge Wells.

The Corporate Marketing and Communications Unit worked closely with Leisure Services in formulating a questionnaire design and maintained project management responsibility for data gathering and production of results. The survey was sent out week commencing 27 October 2003, giving a four-week return date and entry into a free prize draw.

The survey form was designed to provide primarily quantitative data. Qualitative data was obtained through 'Other' comments to specific questions. Completed responses were manually data entered into the statistical software package SNAP where full analysis of the returned survey forms was carried out.

This research coincided with a postal survey to residents/participants in the Bloom competition, which surveyed 380 people, of which 77 responded. A separate report is available for the findings of that research.

3.0 RESPONSES

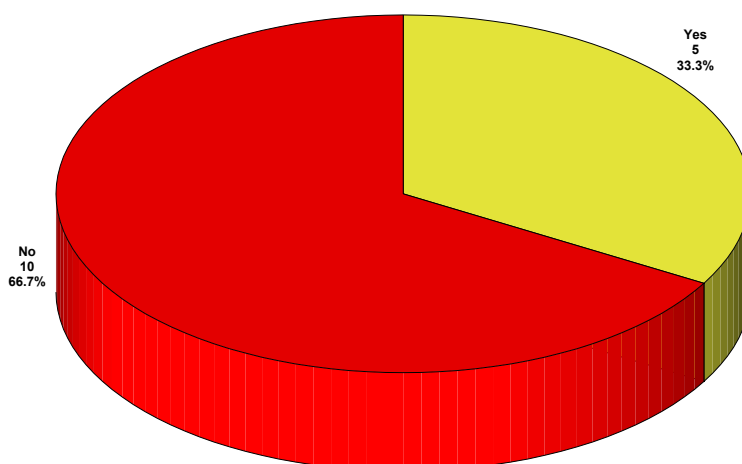
All Parish Councils responded to the survey, some responding by post, others by phone.

4.0 THE COMPETITION

4.1 PARTICIPATION IN SOUTH EAST IN BLOOM

- The first question was designed to gauge the level of participation of Parish Councils in the South East In Bloom Competition across the borough.
- All Parishes were asked to complete the first question.
- Only 5 Parish Councils (33.3%) entered the South East in Bloom Competition as shown in Figure 1 below, these were Capel, Paddock Wood, Hawkhurst, Cranbrook, and Southborough.

FIGURE 1: DOES YOUR PARISH ENTER THE SOUTH EAST IN BLOOM COMPETITION?



- Parish Councils who had not entered the competition were asked to skip the next 11 questions, as they were not relevant to their area of investigation. Therefore the following results are based on five Parish Councils responses.

4.2 COMPETITIONS ENTERED

- Three Parish Councils have entered the South East In Bloom Competition for more than six years.
- Paddock Wood (six-eight years); Cranbrook (eight-ten years); and Southborough (ten years or more).
- Capel Parish has entered the competition for the past 1-2 years.
- Hawkhurst Parish did not indicate how many times they had entered the competition.

4.3 AWARDS

- All five Parish Councils who had entered the competition had won awards.

CAPEL PARISH

- Won the Best Newcomer award and Bronze in the 'Large Village' category. The year in which this award was won was not provided.

PADDOCK WOOD

- Won Best Small Town 2002; 2nd 2001; 3rd 2000; 'Best Environmental Project' 2001.

CRANBROOK

- Won Silver 2003; 2nd in the 'Best Small Town' category 2001 & 2002.

SOUTHBOROUGH

- Won 2002 Recommended; 2003 Bronze in the 'Small Town' category.

HAWKHURST

- Won South East in Bloom Bronze 2003.

4.4 INDIVIDUALS INVOLVED

The next question asked about the levels of participation in the competition.

- A total of 220 residential properties, 174 commercial properties and 11 groups were involved in South East In Bloom for the five Parish Councils that entered the competition.
- In Paddock Wood 200 properties (residential and commercial) were involved, but no other groups.
- In Cranbrook 100 residential properties were involved, 50 commercial properties and ten other groups.
- In Hawkhurst, 20 residential properties and 24 commercial properties were involved with one other group.
- Numbers of those involved in Capel and Southborough were not provided.

4.5 NATURE OF BUSINESS

- Parishes indicated involvement from three accommodation providers (B&Bs, Guest Houses & Hotels), five shops, and three restaurants. Others involved were the Brownies, Gardeners Associations, and Nurseries.

4.6 REASONS FOR ENTERING SOUTH EAST IN BLOOM

- All five Parish Council's indicated that the purpose of their entry into the competition was that it 'Helps to make the area more attractive to live' and it 'Encourages people to work together, building community spirit'.
- 'Promote Pride in the Parish' was indicated by four Parish Councils.
- 'To qualify for funding from the Borough Council', was indicated by three Parish Councils.
- Other reasons given for entering South East In Bloom were it 'Helps to support economic viability of the Parish' and 'Motivated Councillor / Trade Association / Residents driving the activity', indicated by only two Parish Councils.

4.7 IMPORTANCE OF SOUTH EAST IN BLOOM

- All five Parish Councils rated South East in Bloom Competition important to their areas.

4.8 COUNCIL'S FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

- All five Parish Councils rated the Borough Council's financial assistance as important to their Bloom activities.

4.9 EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES

- Paddock Wood, Cranbrook, Hawkhurst, and Southborough arrange events/activities around the South East In Bloom. Capel does not.

PADDOCK WOOD

- Bulb planting; Special Foal Hurst Wood Days; Children's poster painting competition.
- **Anecdotal or substantiated evidence received:** Verbal comments of 'well done' and 'thank you' received from residents.

CRANBROOK

- Plant Sales; proposed Garden Safari; Children's planting competition.
- **Anecdotal or substantiated evidence received:** Constant good comments.

HAWKHURST

- Local competition; garden openings; local presentations; environmental clean-up.
- **Anecdotal or substantiated evidence received:** Increased interest in village activities; increased community and business support.

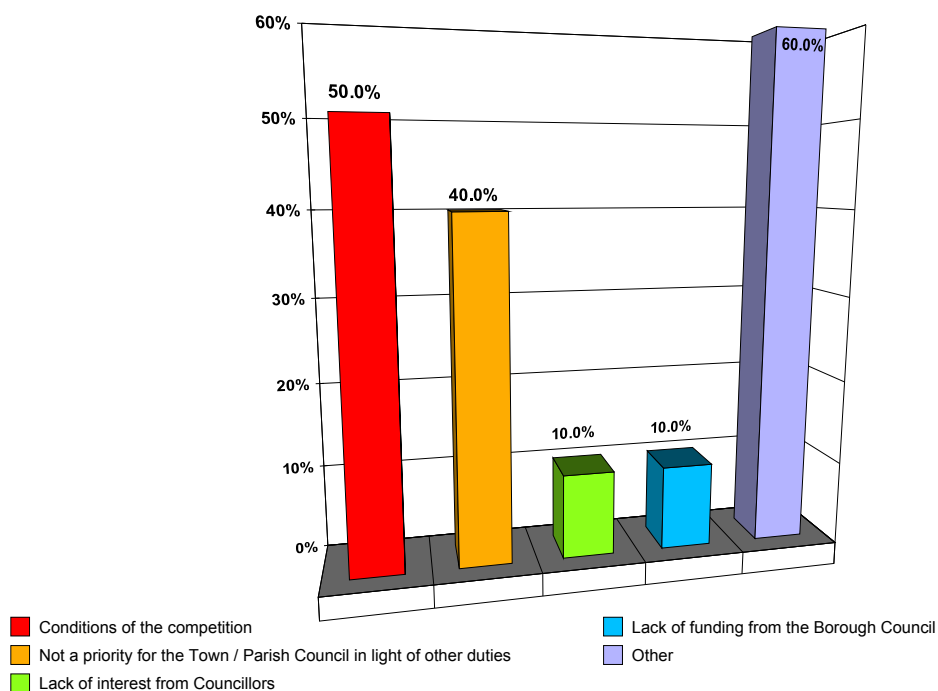
SOUTHBOROUGH

- Garden competition.
- **Anecdotal or substantiated evidence received:** Comments received from townspeople.

5.0 REASONS FOR NOT ENTERING SOUTH EAST IN BLOOM

- Parish Councils that did not enter the competition were asked why they did not enter. These Parish Councils are: Bidborough, Speldhurst, Lamberhurst, Goudhurst, Sandhurst, Frittenden, Benenden, Brenchley, Pembury, and Horsmonden.
- Respondents could give more than one answer so totals will be greater than 100%.
- Five Parish Councils (50.0%) not entering the South East In Bloom Competition indicated their reason for this was because of the conditions of the competition, as shown in Figure 2 below.

FIGURE 2: IF YOU DO NOT ENTER THE SOUTH EAST IN BLOOM COMPETITION, WHY IS THIS?



- A further four Parish Councils (40.0%) indicated their reason for not entering the competition was 'Not a priority for the Town/Parish Council in the light of other duties'. One other Parish Council indicated 'lack of interest from Councillors' and one indicated 'lack of funding from the Borough Council' to be their reasons.
- Other reasons given were lack of interest/support, not aware of competition, increased paper work and no volunteers, and difficult with four separate villages in area.

6.0 IMPROVING SOUTH EAST IN BLOOM

All Parish Councils were asked how the competition could be improved.

CAPEL PARISH

- More promotion to get more involved.

PADDOCK WOOD

- Happy with the level of care, support and monies we receive especially from Mrs Jonica Fox.

HAWKHURST

- Increased financial assistance: Increased publicity.

BIDBOROUGH

- Access to cheap plants, pots, and containers. Try bulk buying / production.

LAMBERHURST

- Send details please.

SANDHURST

- Education.

FRITTENDEN

- Change conditions.

BRENCHLEY

- Rules and Regulations too regimented. Volunteers kindly do all the planting, unfair to specify exactly what they should plant.

CRANBROOK

- Enhance specific areas of neglect e.g. Morts Alley, Tanyard C.P.

SOUTHBOROUGH

- Technical Advice.

7.0 FURTHER INFORMATION

- The final question of the survey asked whether Parish Councils would like to receive a selection of information about Leisure Services.
- Nine Parish Councils would like to receive summary findings from this research.
- Four Parish Councils would like to receive a copy of the Parks Leaflets (including information on allotments).
- Four Parish Councils would like to receive a copy of the Leisure Guide (A comprehensive Leisure Services Guide).
- To ensure Parish Councils received information requested, they were finally asked to provide their full contact details.

8.0 CONCLUSIONS

- There appears to be a high level of support, involvement and co-operation from various groups within the five Parish areas entering the competition, resulting in a sense of community spirit and winning of awards.
- No light industry or farm business was involved in the South East In Bloom Competition.
- All Parish Councils indicated that TWBC's financial assistance is important to their Bloom activities, yet in a previous question, only three Parishes indicated this as a reason for taking part: to qualify for funding.
- Parish Councils felt the 'conditions of the competition' was the main reason why they didn't take part.

9.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- Awareness, lack of interest and support appeared to be some other issues. Existing marketing and promotion campaigns should continue with the aim of overcoming these obstacles with Parishes in order to entice them to enter in the future.
- Means of encouraging greater support and involvement from local businesses could be considered. A new or improved information pack about the event, what to do, where to purchase flowers, supporting guidance, what the judges are looking for etc. could be an opportunity as these were some of the comments received on how to improve the competition.
- The use of the Bloom newsletter should continue.
- Consideration should be given to reviewing the conditions of the competition and with the aim of identifying what elements are preventing some Parishes from entering the competition.

APPENDIX I

THE QUESTIONNAIRE

In Bloom Survey - (Parishes)

The Competition

Q1 Which Parish are you representing?

Q2 Does your Parish enter the South East in Bloom Competition?

- Yes Continue with Q3
 No Go to Q14

Q3 How long has your Parish been entering South East in Bloom?

- First time
 1-2 years
 3-5 years
 6-8 years
 8-10 years
 10 years or more

Q4 Has your Parish won any awards?

- Yes Continue with Q5
 No Go to Q6

Q5 If Yes, please give details of the awards

Q6 How many individuals are involved as:

- Residential properties
 Commercial properties
 Other groups

Q7 What is the nature of businesses involved?

- Accommodation (B&B, Guest Houses, Hotels)
 Shops
 Restaurants / Cafe's
 Light industry
 Farms
 Other

If Other, please specify

Q8 Why does your Parish enter South East in Bloom? (Tick all that apply)

- Helps to support economic viability of the Parish
 Helps to make the area more attractive to live in
 Encourages people to work together, building community spirit
 Promotes pride in the Parish
 Motivated Councillor / Trade Association / Resident driving the activity
 To qualify for funding from the Borough Council
 Other

If Other, please specify

Q9 How important is the South East in Bloom Competition to your area?

- Very important
 Important
 Neither
 Not important
 Not very important

Q10 How important is the Borough Council's financial assistance to your Bloom activities?

- Very important
- Important
- Neither
- Not important
- Not very important

Q11 Do you arrange events / activities around your South East in Bloom activities?

- Yes
- No

Q12 If Yes, please specify

Q13 What evidence do you have (anecdotal or substantiated) to suggest that your floral displays benefit your Parish?

Q14 If you do not enter the South East in Bloom Competition, why is this? (Tick all that apply)

- Conditions of the competition
- Not a priority for the Town / Parish Council in light of other duties
- Lack of interest from Councillors
- Lack of funding from the Borough Council
- Other

If Other, please specify

Q15 How could the Borough Council help you to improve your Bloom activities?

Personal details

Q16 Which of the following information would you like to receive? (Please provide your address):

- Summary findings from this research ...
- Parks leaflet (including information on allotments)
- Leisure Guide (a comprehensive Leisure Services Guide)

Q17 To ensure you receive further information / enter into our prize draw, please provide the following information

Name	<input type="text"/>
Address.....	<input type="text"/>
Town	<input type="text"/>
Postcode.....	<input type="text"/>
Telephone number	<input type="text"/>
e-mail address	<input type="text"/>

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey. Please return using the pre-paid envelope by Friday 21 November 2003