



EAST MIDLANDS

**AWARD**  
**2021**

**BARROW UPON SOAR**

Judge's Award

Mr Terry Brooks, 21 Ennerdale Road for an immaculate and imaginative collection of planters and decorative effects together with all yes round community effort

Jeff Bates  
President  
East Midlands in Bloom

Sharon Sutton  
Chairman  
East Midlands in Bloom





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Jeff Bates  
President  
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Sharon Sutton  
Chairman  
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EAST MIDLANDS

## SILVER AWARD 2021

### BARROW UPON SOAR IN BLOOM

Small Town Category

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "J Bates".

Jeff Bates  
President  
East Midlands in Bloom

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "S Sutton".

Sharon Sutton  
Chairman  
East Midlands in Bloom





## SMALL TOWN CATEGORY

### Barrow upon Soar

Award : Silver

Judged on 14<sup>th</sup> July

Judge: John Constable

**Judges Award: Mr. Terry Brooks**, 21 Ennerdale Road - For an immaculate and imaginative collection of planters and decorative effects, together with a commendable all year round community effort.

I was met by Annette Richardson who has been involved with Barrow in Bloom since its inception in 2019. We had an enjoyable and informative tour visiting many volunteers at the sites allowing them to show us around their work for which they are rightly proud. I was impressed by the diversity of groups we met - The Gardening Club, Charnwood Borough Council, Wild about Barrow, The WI, Barrow Parish Council as well as some of the individuals involved - all of whom were supportive and involved with demonstrated projects. In addition, there was a developing positive relationship with the council contractor Idverde UK. The portfolio was interesting, informative, and helpful and information boards well used on the judging tour.

It is an exciting time in the evolution of Barrow in Bloom with some very positive projects just started or under serious consideration giving potential future success in EMIB very possible.

### Areas of Achievement

#### Section A

The area around Deep Lock was developing, and a herb planter was in place and spring flowering bulbs had been planted - a picture on the portfolio would be useful - some potential screening for a deep "pit" adjacent to the towpath had been planted.

The use of French marigolds as an associated theme from the twin town of Marans in France [French lavender was suggested in the 2019 report] was witnessed and perhaps could be developed. Plant containers in High Street, maintained by the Parrish Council were a high standard and well maintained.

Jerusalem Island enhances the entrance to the town and the involvement of the gardening club with individual areas of responsibility seems to work well. King George V playing fields were well maintained - the sensory garden used recycled wood chip is maturing - some of the more vigorous perennials will soon need attention - which was planned.

Mark from the Parish Council is to be congratulated for his efforts in George V fields and gardens. The WI garden and war memorial were also well maintained.

#### Section B

I heard of plans for wildflower areas and how "no mow May" had been observed - on the route I saw a private front garden that was being managed with wildflowers and mown strips for access. "Wild about Barrow" is another group within The Bloom umbrella and it is exciting to hear of the plans for future planting/sowing. The entire town I visited was virtually litter and graffiti free - the public seating [with one exception at Deep Lock] was very well maintained and clean. Recycled wood chip was used in the sensory garden at George V and composting was also in place with

## **BARROW UPON SOAR**

local public houses contributing vegetable waste. Details of crisp packet and drink tin recycling were outlined - a quick visit to see the facilities would be beneficial. The introduction of bird boxes and plans for more were outlined.

### Section C

Barrow in Bloom has successfully developed relations with several local community organisations and their contributions were witnessed. The garden, pub planter and tree of the month competitions were explained and are helping both to raise money for charity as well as enhancing all year round community involvement. Good use was made of information boards which assisted with explanations and allowed those involved to explain and demonstrate some of their activities. Considerable plans were outlined for areas such as Deep Lock - a partner group has been created with assistance from the Canal and River Trust and I met volunteer Brian. They have made good progress with encouragement and help from neighbours.

It was very encouraging to meet Charnwood BC and PC representatives and hear of the Borough Council's positive attitude towards community project support.

Plans for work at Holy Trinity church is awaiting permission to proceed and the outcome will be interesting to witness.

## **Areas for Development**

### Section A - Horticulture

The Merans garden on High Street could benefit from some enhancement - either by suitable (perhaps drought resistant species?) planting or perhaps some information about the twin town? The colour theme in planters from Deep Lock into the town centre/community library could probably have a more consistent theme?

### Section B - Environment

Perhaps the canal could be used to demonstrate wildlife activity a little more - a nearby information board perhaps could also mention why it was originally established? the DeepLock project to hide the eyesore alongside the lock might need some more reinforcing to have the desired effect? Weeds growing at the edges of roads on the judge's route are detrimental to the entry and lessen the impact of nearby colourful, very well maintained front gardens.

The use of recycled water was limited and could be extended - perhaps from the library roof or the Parish Council offices? There was quite a lot of mention of recycling/composting projects - perhaps another year when cars are used a visit to suitable sites [in addition to King George V field] could be arranged?

It is good to read and hear of plans for improvements based 2019 recommendations - future tours can benefit from demonstrating what has been achieved.

### Section C - Community

Perhaps a more prominent permanent information board or similar could be installed to emphasise the twinning with Marans? Similarly, the fossils featured around town made an interesting theme - however I didn't see any explanation or relevant information boards?