

# BEST KEPT VILLAGE COMPETITION ENTRY GUIDELINES - 2024

COMPLETED ENTRIES TO BE RETURNED TO CPRE WILTSHIRE OFFICE BY FRIDAY 19<sup>th</sup> APRIL 2024.

**Entries should be by email if at all possible.**

**Entrants must include both a map and a report with their entry form to validate their participation**

## VILLAGE POPULATION NUMBER

CPRE requires a **population figure**, *not* the electoral roll figure, to be entered on the Entry Form. **TO ENSURE THAT THE VILLAGE IS PLACED IN THE CORRECT CATEGORY IT IS IMPORTANT THIS FIGURE IS ACCURATE.** It should be taken from the Office of National Statistics 2021 Census website at:

<https://www.wiltshireintelligence.org.uk/topics/census/#build> unless this is known to be inaccurate due to very recent building. There is no advantage in understating or overstating the population. It could even be detrimental as the village could be competing against a greater number of villages, diminishing its chance of going through to the next round. CPRE Wiltshire reserves the right to transfer any village into the correct population category. Where more than one village within a Parish wishes to enter the Competition each must complete its own entry form.

## MAP

- A **clear and informative A4 size map with a scale**. This could be an extract from an Ordnance Survey map or from another supplier (see below) and it must be to scale. **Remember that this is to help the judges to navigate around the village and key features. North must be clearly marked** to assist the judges in walking around the village. **They key factor is that it should be clear enough to identify all relevant features.** If necessary two maps could be provided: one showing the entire village and another showing detail. On it the location of **all key features** (as listed on the entry form, e.g. the village allotments) that the village wants to be judged **must** be shown, preferably using arrows and avoiding obscuring detail. Alternatively key features should be numbered and a separate key should be provided.
- Please remember that maps will be printed and/or photocopied so **they must have good contrast and colour. Please check the map for accuracy and currency before sending it.** Some maps received in recent years have been out of date regarding village features, e.g. allotments. **Please also print the map that you intend to send by email, to check that it can be printed by the organiser and judges: in recent years some maps have been far too small and/or too faint to be read well enough when printed.**
- **The village boundary of the area to be judged must be marked on the map by a coloured line** for the judges' information. This boundary should **encompass the entire core village area and all key features** unless there are exceptional reasons why this is not appropriate, in which case these should be explained in the entry paperwork. It should also follow natural lines, e.g. field boundaries, and should **not** usually be a series of straight lines. **The boundary should not be the parish boundary** if this is considerably larger and extends well beyond the area generally recognised as the village. Areas cannot be omitted because they are unsightly: the reason for the condition of such areas should be explained.
- **All footpaths** should be marked by **dashed lines of a different colour to the boundary line**. Accessibility includes being easily able to reach the beginning of a footpath from a pavement, e.g. across a wide verge. The Parish Council should inform CPRE Wiltshire either on the entry form or by contacting the Branch Office should Wiltshire Council fail to fulfil their reasonable responsibilities in this respect. **There is no need to suggest a route for judges and they will not necessarily follow it anyway.**
- **Mapping software** is available online should you wish to create a map in this way. An example supplier is Parish Online ([www.parish-online.co.uk](http://www.parish-online.co.uk)) which is used for all sorts of parish mapping. There is a 30 day free trial (which should be more than adequate for this purpose) and through the Wiltshire Association of Local Councils there's also a 20% discount for new sign ups (using code wiltshire20). Other suppliers are available.

## VILLAGE REPORT

Please submit a brief report outlining village projects, activities and special problems, together with a summary of how the village enhances its community spirit. This should be between one and four A4 size pages of printed script (photographs can be included if they enhance the report). Longer reports may be submitted if they already exist but are unlikely to influence the judges more than a shorter report. Brief descriptions of any **problem areas** and of any **conservation areas** (see below) should be included if there is inadequate space for these on the entry form. The report is your chance to "sell" your village and its key features in the context of the BKVC. A copy of the Parish Magazine could also be included, but this is not essential.

## GENERAL POINTS

- To help judges please provide your village post code on the entry form for their SatNav settings.
- Judges look for the absence of litter as well as the overall condition and tidiness of any feature visible or accessible to the public **listed on the entry form and shown on the map**. If rubbish bags are in evidence, awaiting collection, marks will not be deducted provided that the bags are neatly stacked and there is no rubbish littering the adjacent area.
- **Any areas specifically set aside for conservation and wildlife**, for example an uncut area in the churchyard, verge, hedgerow or village green, **must be specified on the entry form, clearly identified on the map**, and in the report for judges. Note that for the purposes of the BKVC, a conservation area is as described above and is NOT an area specified as such in Wiltshire Council planning regulations. **We strongly encourage villages to have a positive approach to conservation and wildlife.** Judges appreciate that hedges should not be cut until the bird breeding season is over – normally at the beginning of July. In graveyards, **graves should be**

**identifiable and not screened by grass immediately in front**, but the remainder of the graveyard could be left with long grass and this would not then be marked down.

- **If road verges are deliberately left as conservation areas this should be stated in the entry form and/or village report.** Such verges need not all be identified on the map. However, remember that verges should be short near road junctions to provide good visibility for safety reasons.
- **Allowances will be made for detrimental factors beyond village control – please use the space allocated on the entry form to list any such problems (such as road works).**
- The scoring system and final assessment ensures that no village will lose marks if it lacks any or all of the typical listed features.

### **PREPARATION**

- Preparing the entry papers should not take long, especially if you have entered before. If not, then share the work between two or three people. If possible, ask one or two other people to check the documents before they are sent.
- Improving the appearance of the village also need not take up a lot of time. Try to share the load amongst many people, and have several short sessions throughout the year, to make the final effort in April/May easier. End with a social gathering: coffee/tea or in the pub!
- Get to know your Parish Steward and make a programme for him to complement your volunteers' efforts.
- Check the mark sheet to ensure that you have covered as many of the criteria as possible.
- Use the Competition as an opportunity to motivate people to improve the appearance of the village.
- Hold your own pre-inspection in late-April, to identify any areas that could do with attention.

### **On Highways**

Wiltshire Council Highways Department have confirmed that villagers preparing for the Competition by collecting litter or tidying verges do not need to hold a Streetworks license. However Parish Councils or entry organisers should:

- Check that their insurance provides third-party cover for volunteers working in such areas.
- Carry out a simple risk assessment for such volunteer activity, especially for main roads.
- Brief volunteers working on highways, and instruct them to wear high-visibility vests.
- Post road sentries and/or traffic warning signs where volunteers are working on roads with large amounts of traffic and/or where vehicles travel fast.

### **TIMETABLE**

The first round of judging will take place between mid-May and mid-June. Pairs of judges will judge villages that are not close to where they live. Each pair judges **all** the villages in one size category (Large, Medium or Small) in one of the four districts. The best village in each category goes through to the County Round which determines the best kept village in each size category. The County Round judging takes place in July. Pairs of judges will visit **all four** First Round winners in a single size category to determine the Best Kept Large, Medium and Small Villages in Wiltshire for 2024.

### **CERTIFICATES**

Framed CPRE certificates will be presented to the winner of each category in the First Round and to the first three villages in the County Round, at presentations to be arranged between the local CPRE Group Chairman and the Parish Council. Certificates for the Best Newcomer village (judged independently by a separate pair of judges and for a village that has not entered for at least the previous six years) and for the Merit Award (for consistent high performance over the previous six years) will be made under similar arrangements. These presentations should take place as early as possible from September to December.

### **FINANCIAL PRIZES**

All cash prizes will be transferred to the parish council accounts using online banking.

### **COUNTY ROUND PRESENTATIONS**

The main Presentation Ceremonies will take place on Sunday 21<sup>st</sup> September (tbc), in the three villages (Large, Medium and Small) judged the Best Kept in their category in Wiltshire for 2024, and also in the Laurence Kitching Award-winning village. CPRE Wiltshire President (The Lord-Lieutenant of Wiltshire), the CPRE Branch Chairman, the High Sheriff of Wiltshire, the Chairman of Wiltshire Council and representatives of the sponsors usually participate at these ceremonies. Each will receive a BKVC standard (held for one year), a sponsor's plaque, a Wiltshire Council plaque and CPRE certificates.