

## **HAUGHTON – BEST KEPT VILLAGE JUDGES' COMMENTS 2011**

Haughton had excellent awareness of BKV participation through its contacts with local organisations, the parish website, the church magazine, parish newsletter, notice boards, BKV organising committee meetings, and there was plenty of BKV posters, including Haughton's own "special" BKV posters throughout the village.

There was a stunning display of over 120 children's posters, prominently displayed on the main road opposite the church, with others on notice boards and in bus shelters – WELL DONE to the children of Haughton and to the Primary School's participation.

All notice boards were in excellent condition and prominently sited, with all notices neatly displayed. There was an impressive array of local information, which included local activities, parish and district council details, local club activities and courses available further afield.

Recycling awareness was very well covered, with details of local collections and bulky refuse facilities; and there was a mini-centre at the shops.

Dog fouling awareness was very good indeed, with an abundance of notices and bins throughout the village. There were excellent "home produced" signs, together with a theme of children's posters. An absolutely great effort by all.

The churchyard and burial ground at St Giles were a credit to the village. The main churchyard was immaculate, with well-trimmed grass, neat edges and pathways and no weeds. There was also a well maintained wildlife area. The burial ground was also excellently maintained, with well-mown grass, neat and tidy edges and no litter.

The village hall, its surrounds and car park, were in pristine condition, with no litter, no weeds and a well-mown grass area.

Both public houses were first rate, being extremely neat and tidy both at the front and rear. The beer gardens were immaculate, litter and weed free and with a very inviting atmosphere.

The telephone box was excellent; clean and tidy with weed free surrounds. The telephone was working and the box had recently been painted.

The bus shelters were a credit to Haughton. The oak shelter was absolutely wonderful, clean and tidy (except for the final judging – when a sweep out would have improved its appearance). The older bus shelter was also in excellent condition (newly painted) and contained BKV posters and notices. Both had current timetable inside and their surrounds were immaculate.

All seats and benches were in tip-top condition, well sited, varnished, with neat and tidy surrounds. These were an absolute credit to the village.

The war memorial surrounds were maintained to an extremely high standard, with colourful, tasteful planting. The grass surrounds were neatly cut, and there was "not a weed in sight".



Public open spaces were excellent. The large open space and playing fields were attractive and mown to a high standard with no litter or dog fouling, a perfect example of this type of facility, (however the bridleway alongside was churned up during the June visit). All the small open spaces and verges along the main road and street corners were very well maintained with colourful planting in places and no weeds. All the judges said "it was a treat to see these well-tended and lovingly cared for spaces".

All private gardens were excellent, a credit to the residents and indicative of their BKV awareness and good community spirit.

The children's play equipment is getting old, but nevertheless is very varied, well-maintained and attractive; it appeared to be well used. The safety surfaces consisted of a good depth of green bark.

The map was accurate, clear and concise, with colour symbols used to good effect; the key to the map took on board last year's judges' comments. The map and key were well laminated, - just as a BKV map should be.

There was no litter or dog fouling anywhere – a remarkable achievement considering the pressures of a main road running through the village. This was a superb effort by all, showing the strong community effort and links that exist in Haughton.

The judges were impressed by the very high standard achieved by Haughton this year. In particular, they praised the children's posters, the BKV awareness, the well maintained churchyard, excellent bus shelters, village hall surrounds, good open spaces and well maintained private gardens. Judges were very impressed by the "presentation pack" included in the BKV entry details. This showed the village's approach to using the BKV competition to generate pride in the village and to create a spirit of co-operation to make Haughton "a better place to live and be part of".

The community spirit and involvement stands out and enabled Haughton to be winners of Best Large Village and Trophy Winner in Stafford District; and Best Large Village in the whole of Staffordshire.

Many congratulations to you all. Best wishes for 2012

John T Perry, MBE  
Chairman, BKV Working Group

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