

## **GINHALL LANE ALLOTMENTS**

### **JUDGING AND AWARDS**

#### **PROPOSAL**

To re-establish the judging of all allotment gardens and subsequently, during the annual Harvest Supper, the presentation of awards.

#### **BACKGROUND**

Traditionally the Town Council has organised the Awards and Harvest Supper evening as well as appointing the judges. The judges have assessed the allotment gardens intermittently throughout the year and, after comparing notes, determined the winner and runners up of the “Best Kept Allotment”. Sadly, over the past two years the judging process has lapsed.

#### **RATIONALE**

The key reasons why this process is beneficial for allotment gardeners is its aim to:

- Celebrate good gardening practice on our allotment site
- Reward allotment gardeners’ efforts and commitment in maintaining a productive plot throughout the year
- Encourage both new and established allotment gardeners to strive for excellence
- Help raise standards through a little healthy and friendly competition

#### **PROCESS**

On behalf of the Town Council, the Allotment Association Committee has produced criteria for the judging process. A credible and measurable assessment tool provides the judges with an agreed standard as well as offering guidance for each allotment gardener.

## **WHAT THE JUDGES WILL BE ASSESSING**

### **CULTIVATION 50%**

- Productive plot throughout the year
- A varied range of crops, regularly harvested
- Evidence of crop rotation
- Healthy plants
- Use of companion planting
- Innovative use of plot e.g. frames to utilise vertical space
- Plot free from perennial weeds and as free as possible from annual weeds

### **ENVIRONMENT 25%**

- Flowering plants which encourage pollinating insects
- Evidence of attracting natural predators e.g. bug boxes, small log piles, pond
- Evidence of composting
- Rain water collection from shed/greenhouse
- Use of mulches e.g. compost, well-rotted manure

### **APPEARANCE 25%**

- Plot number clearly visible (essential for judges)
- Creative design and use of decorative features
- Absence of rubbish and hazards
- Good maintenance of structures e.g. greenhouses, sheds, paths and boundary fences
- Stakes and supports secure and cane tips protected to avoid injury

It is important that allotment gardeners maintain a consistent level of good practice throughout the year and therefore it is required of the judges to visit the allotment site on 3-4 occasions at seasonal intervals. The judges' decision will be final and no appeal process will apply. Winners will be notified by the site manager and asked to keep the result confidential until the award evening. It is envisaged that initially the "Best Kept Allotment" award is re-established and, perhaps when the process is reviewed, additional award categories may be introduced.

## **CONCLUSION**

Through re-establishing the awards for best gardening practice, allotment gardeners may not only strive through self-motivation but have an opportunity to see their achievements recognised and celebrated within the allotment community.

**WRITTEN BY LEOMINSTER ALLOTMENT ASSOCIATION AND**  
**APPROVED BY LEOMINSTER TOWN COUNCIL 2015**