

Thanks to...

Adullam Homes Housing Association Limited	Congleton Town Council
Albert Williams- Community Garden Volunteer	Congleton Town Trust
Alexandra Court Hotel	Congleton West Rangers
Ansa	Congleton Young People's Trust
Astbury Mere Care Home	DJM Nursery
Astbury Mere Country Park Trust	Eaton & Hulme Walfield Brownies
Bradwell Court Residential Care Home	Eco Learning
Bromley Farm Community Trust	Electric Picture House
Bromley Farm Neighbourhood	Four Oaks Nursery
Buglawton Community Group	Friendly Faces Nursery
Buglawton Cubs & Scouts	Friends of Congleton Park
Buglawton In Bloom	Graham Construction
Canal & River Trust	Heath View Care Home
Canal & Railway Station Tidy Volunteers	Hillary Avenue Allotments
Cheshire East Council	Kids Planet Nursery
Cheshire East Highways	Margaret Williamson Memorial Fund
Congleton Bath House & Physic Garden Trust	New Life Church Jubilee Club
Congleton Businesses	Old Saw Mill- Secret Garden
Congleton Community Projects	Saint Mary's Catholic School Gardening Club
Congleton Fire Cadets	SAS Daniels LLP
Congleton Fire Station	Shops and Businesses in Congleton
Congleton Food 4 Free	St. Peter's Church
Congleton Guides	The Nursery
Congleton High School- Print Room	U3A
Congleton Horticultural Society	U3A Knit, Sew & Natter Group
Congleton In Bloom Team	Victoria Beds
Congleton Inclosure Trust	William Dean Countryside & Education Trust



Congleton In Bloom 2019



Cheshire Community Pride Best Kept Village Overall Winner

Meet the Team



The In Bloom Committee’s core team of ten members have been meeting in the Town Hall since November 2018 on a monthly basis and fortnightly from mid-May to get all the plans into actions for the summer period. In between these meetings, the committee members meet with other community and voluntary groups to help bring the plans and ideas to life and to help enhance the work in and around the town, contributing to a cleaner, greener Congleton.

Amanda Martin, Anna Morrison, Bob Edwards, David Brown, Glen Williams, Jackie MacArthur, Margaret Gartside, Martha Hayes, Patti Pinto, Ruth Burgess

Aims & Objectives

- To make Congleton an attractive place to live, work, shop and visit
- To provide opportunities for volunteers in the community to become involved either individually or in groups
- To make Congleton a clean, green town through anti-litter campaigns, organising litter picks, removal of graffiti, removal of fly posting, improving local grot spots and recycling campaigns
- To promote tourism and support the retail sector by providing attractive floral displays and green spaces
- To raise standards and promote the town by entering competitions such as RHS in Bloom and the Cheshire Civic Pride Awards
- To encourage Eco Schools to gain green flag awards, encourage bio-diversity, energy conservation and the growing of local food
- To involve young people in taking an active role in Congleton in Bloom
- To encourage people to take pride in the place they live



Achievements



Congleton In Bloom was formed by a small group of dedicated volunteers in 1998. They were determined to do something to brighten up Congleton, the group has evolved and grown and achieved many successes:

Best Large Town North West in Bloom: 2000, 2005, 2013, 2015, 2016 & 2017

North West in Bloom GOLD: 2000, 2006, 2007, 2009, 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017 & 2018

Finalists in Britain in Bloom: 2001, 2007, 2014, 2016 & 2018

Britain in Bloom Silver: 2007, **Britain in Bloom GOLD:** 2014, 2016 & 2018

Six time winners of the Cheshire Civic Pride Awards

Fifteen Green Flag sites for the town—Congleton Park awarded 12th Green Flag

Congleton Park Awarded the Cheshire Playing Fields Les George Parks Award 2017

Cheshire Pride, Community Champion 2015– Patti Pinto

Cheshire Community Pride, Best Kept Village- Overall Winner 2018



How Congleton In Bloom is Supported

Name	Amount	Details
Congleton Town Council	£12,000	In Bloom Budgets
Congleton Partnership	£6,000	Supporting the In Bloom Projects
Congleton Businesses	£4,850	Sponsoring Hanging Baskets
Business Sponsorship	£180	Additional £10 Sponsorship Pledges
Cheshire Community Action	£100	Prize Money for Best Kept Village
Congleton U3A	£100	Donation
U3A Knit, Sew & Natter Group	£100	Donation
William Dean Trust	£750	Towards the Elizabeth Garden
Congleton Young Peoples Trust	£250	Towards the Back2Back Gardens
TOTAL	£24,330	
Plus Volunteer Hours	£54,700	5,470 hours at £10 per hour

David Brown Chairman of Congleton In Bloom:

“The In Bloom competitions are a real force for good, generating a great deal of improvement and community pride in Congleton. Over the years there has been an amazing amount of support from local communities, businesses, schools, groups and individuals who all pull together to make our town look as good as it possibly can. There is so much more to In Bloom than the pretty flowers, Congleton In Bloom brings the community together!”

Appendix 3 - Press Items

Cubs dig in for In Bloom effort



The Cubs mulching around the fruit trees.

Tots grow host of golden daffodils



Nursery children with their daffs.

Volunteers wanted for Saturday 'town tidy'



The next "Congleton town tidy" organised by Congleton in Bloom, which is going for gold in 2019 — is on Saturday from 10am to noon.

Volunteers should meet at community garden on Lawton Street by the Treo statue.

Some volunteers will go out to litter pick, some will be weeding, and some will be helping in the community gardens. All are welcome, even if they only have a free half an hour.

Pictured are volunteers at the April tidy-up.

New ferns planted in park



ends of Congleton Park member and William Dean trustee, Patti Pinto, with the ferns

Working together to bin litter



Amber Tingle painting an image on one of the bins at the Bromley Farm Youth Club before installation.

Litterbins have been given a new lease of life thanks to a partnership project between Bromley Farm Community Development Trust, Canal and River Trust, Congleton Railway Station and Canal Tidy Group volunteers and Congleton Town Council.

Six young people from Bromley Farm Youth Club have refurbished two old and unused cast iron bins. They were cleaned, re-painted black and decorated with transport and wildlife images during youth club evenings.

The bins have been installed by volunteers of the Canal and River Trust as part of the Congleton Railway Station and Canal Tidy Group.

They are positioned along the canal towpath between bridges

75 and 76 (railway station bridge to snail bridge).

Glen Williams, chairman of Bromley Farm Community Development Trust, Congleton Tidy Town Champion and a volunteer at the railway station and canal towpath, said: "These bins had been lying around unused for a number of years and it is great to see them refurbished and being well used, reducing the amount of litter that is dropped along this section of the canal towpath."

"The young people who cleaned and painted the bins really enjoyed the activity and they have done a really good job. The bins are very heavy and I thank the volunteers and Canal and River Trust who installed them along the towpath."

(Submitted photographs).



Appendix 3 - Social Media

Thousands of likes, shares and great feedback!



@Congletontowncouncil

@Congleton-In-Bloom-1377417495816332

@Congleton-Partnership-39675823430058

@FofCP

@CongletonPark

@AstburyMereCountryPark

@Astbury-Mere-Care-Home-370240140106794

@Congleton-Bath-House-and-Physic-Garden-183758682045944

@OldSawMill

@Congleton-Sustainability-Group-1633258516905672

@Buglawton-In-Bloom-752316145167633

@NewLifeChurchCongleton

@alexandrachotel



@CongletonTown



www.congleton-tc.gov.uk

www.congletonpartnership.co.uk

www.friendsofcongletonpark.co.uk

www.astburymerecountrypark.uk

www.porthaven.co.uk/astbury-mere-congleton

congletonbpt.wordpress.com

www.theoldsawmill.org

www.nlchurch.org.uk

www.thealexandrachotel.com

www.congletonu3a.org.uk



Calendar of Events 2018-19

August:

- ◇ Wildflower meadow in full bloom- Congleton Park.
- ◇ Keep on top of watering, deadheading and weeding.
- ◇ Taking pictures and notes for plant choice decision making for the following year.
- ◇ Free summer concerts continue in the park organised by the Friends of Congleton Park Team— a chance for people to enjoy the music and the floral displays.
- ◇ Open weekends throughout August and September at the Back 2 Back Gardens, designed & planted by 250 young bloomers, ranging 2-20 years. 2018 theme: 5 & 20- to celebrate 5 years of the B2B Gardens and 20 Years of Congleton In Bloom.

September & October:

- ◇ Congleton & District Horticultural Society host their annual show in the Town Hall.
- ◇ Reviewed the marking sheets to plan for improvements for NWIB judging 2019.
- ◇ Agreed Park Plaque to celebrate Congleton In Bloom 21st Birthday— designed and planted by the Streetscape team.
- ◇ Production of an In Bloom Calendar.

November & December

- ◇ Congleton In Bloom received the following results from the summer judging:
 Congleton In Bloom GOLD for North West & Britain In Bloom
 Cheshire Community Pride, Best Kept Village, Overall Winner 2018
 Community Pride "Little Gem" Award at Moody Street Sensory Garden
 IYN's: x5 Level 5 , x2 Level 4 , x1 Level 3. Businesses in Bloom: x2 GOLD
- ◇ Town Centre Winter Tubs planted up by the school children, helped by the Mayor & CIB Team.
- ◇ Delivery of Christmas Trees.
- ◇ In Bloom Celebration Evening— more than 120 attendees.
- ◇ Volunteers carry on planting spring bulbs, trees, weeding and tidying their gardens before the really cold weather sets in.
- ◇ Congleton Rotary Club provided purple crocuses for the international "Purple 4 Polio" scheme. 1000 were planted by volunteers at the Elizabeth Garden and 500 in Margaret's Place.
- ◇ Quinta Primary School Year 2 class planted 450 crocuses and 100 tulips for the residents at Heathview.
- ◇ Streetscape team protect plants from the frost.
- ◇ Astbury Mere Care Home Volunteer, Jan Woolridge gave a winter flower arranging demonstration to the elderly residents, creating Robin themed arrangements.
- ◇ Buglawton In Bloom volunteers held several outdoor sessions and planted up new planters, three fruit trees, spring bulbs and extended the wildflower area.
- ◇ Congleton In Bloom members attended a number of events to present CIB certificates.



Calendar of Events 2018-19

January & February:

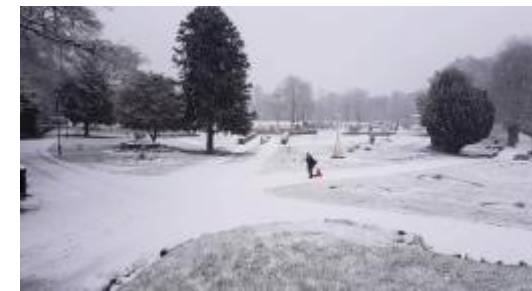
- ◇ Designs, colour choices and plant orders were finalised and ready to be planted in the spring
- ◇ Winter maintenance— pruning trees, hedges and shrubs etc.
- ◇ Recycled over 120 Christmas Trees

March & April:

- ◇ RHS Tatton accepts Patti's blooming border design, sponsored by CIB. The Tatton team started growing for the show.
- ◇ U3A garden group formed and began weekly work at the Community Garden & Margaret's Place— 1st task, pruning roses.
- ◇ Pruning and tidying in Heathview garden.
- ◇ Congleton Town Tidies started, scheduled for the first Saturday of each month; March started from Congleton Park and April started from Astbury Mere Country Park.
- ◇ Orders received for 240 hanging baskets for the shops in the town centre, increased numbers from 2018.
- ◇ Patti Pinto attended an RHS school gardening training course at local Congleton Primary School.
- ◇ Members of the Congleton team met with Newcastle-Under-Lyme In Bloom to swap ideas.
- ◇ Members of the In Bloom team attended the NWIB coordinators meeting.
- ◇ Congleton Town Council, with members from both the In Bloom and Sustainability group visited Cheshire East Ansa recycling unit and services.
- ◇ Held a plant-up and recruitment session at the Easter Treats day in the Town Centre, with sunflower seeds for all the children.
- ◇ Quinta Primary School planted 600 sunflower seeds.

May:

- ◇ Volunteers planted new golden roses at the West St border
- ◇ Town Centre tubs planted up for the summer by local school children— all old compost recycled.
- ◇ Hanging baskets, troughs and planters brighten up the town.
- ◇ May Town Tidy starting from the Community Garden.
- ◇ More volunteers signed up to the In Bloom database.
- ◇ Beds rotovated and fertilised ready for bedding to be planted
- ◇ Congleton Bath House & Physic Garden held an open day in their grounds.
- ◇ Local nursery: Kids Planet, attend the Moody Street garden weekly to maintain with the help of the children.
- ◇ Congleton West Rangers work on the Community Orchard at Astbury Mere.
- ◇ Congleton In Bloom members with U3A volunteers plant the large town centre planters.
- ◇ Work on Elizabeth's Garden resumed with Fire Cadets & U3A gardeners.
- ◇ U3A gardeners also planted up town centre tree troughs.
- ◇ Wheelbarrow Challenge began— seeds delivered to 17 groups of children.





Appendix 1 - Plant List

Plant Name	Quantity
Ageratum Blue Champion	400
Alyssum Clear Crystal Mixed	2500
Antirrhinum Appeal & Sonnet Mixed	650
Begonia Tuberous Mocca Mixed & Apple Blossom	350
Begonia Devil Pink, Devil Red & Devil White	2750
Begonia Heaven Red & Heaven Rose	400
Begonia Illumination Golden Picotee	100
Begonia Nonstop Yellow, Citrus Mixed & Mocca Mixed	2600
Begonia Organdy Mixed	300
Begonia Semperflorens Devil Mixed & Heaven Mixed	2200
Begonia Supercascade Mixed	200
Begonia Tuberous Sunburst	500
Calibrachoa White Rose Vein	100
Cannas Brown Leaf & Green Leaf	66
Cinerarias Cirrus	600
Cordylines Green & Red	54
Figaro Orange, Red, Violet, White & Yellow Shades	500
Fuchsia	10
Geranium Palladium Candyfloss Mixed, Apple Blossom, Bullseye Light Pink, Bullseye Mixed, Horizon Violet, Horizon Pink, Lavender & Red Picotee	3600
Impatiens Blue Pearl, Divine Islander Mixed, Divine Mystic Mixed, Hot & Spicy Mix & White	2900
Lobelia Cardinalis Queen Victoria, Crystal Palace, Rosamond, White Lady & Cambridge Blue	2800
Marigold African Marvel Mixed, African Orange & Yellow, American Marvel Mix, Bonanza Mixed & Bonanza Yellow	2750
Non Stop Begonia Orange & White	600
Ornamental Millet Purple Baron	25
Osteospermum Berries and Cream Mix	200
Pyrethrum Golden Moss	500
Red Salvias Vanguard	300
Salvia Patio Blue, Patio Deep Blue, Purple Vista & Victoria Blue	2250
Sunflowers (3/4ft)	20
Victoria White Salvias	500
Zinnia Zahara Double Strawberry	1000
	31725

Appendix 2 Helping to make Congleton Cleaner and Greener

Congleton Household Waste & Recycling– Tonnage 18/19

Category	18/19 Tonnage (t)
Amenity Waste to Landfill	778.57
Green Waste	530.02
Card	119.89
Chipboard or Mixed Wood/ Chipboard	281.03
Glass	10.95
Paper	52.02
Plastic Bottles	3.87
Wood	209.41
Textiles	47.61
Small WEEE (SDA)	105.26
Large WEEE (LDA)	44.96
Total Tonnage	3,145.37
Total Recycled	2,307.19
Total Reused	54.47
Diverted from Landfill	75.2



Volunteer Hours

U3A Garden Group formed in March 2019- 350 hours over the last 6 months on three sites in Congleton
IYN's approx. 600 hours each
Town Tidies approx. 120 hours
Congleton In Bloom Team- Meetings; 200 hours, plus Town Tidies and extra work
Plus all of the work that the volunteers work on outside of CIB events.

Calendar of Events 2018-19

June:

- ◇ June Town Tidy starting from Antrobus Street Car Park.
- ◇ Streetscape team added 26,063 summer plants to the roundabouts and public spaces.
- ◇ Many residents and visitors enjoy the local produce at Congleton's annual Food & Drink Festival.
- ◇ Town Bears on the roundabout have their yearly hair cut!
- ◇ Intensive summer season of mowing, weed spraying, strimming and watering.
- ◇ Schools and Youth Groups get organised for the Bird themed Back2Back gardens.
- ◇ Work continued on Elizabeth's Garden by U3A volunteers, along with two other sites.
- ◇ CIB team members meet with the Countryside Ranger at Astbury Mere Country Park.
- ◇ B2B Gardens planted & designed by 250 young gardeners in the community polytunnels.



July:

- ◇ July Town Tidy starting from New Life Church- many volunteers including the fire service worked on Elizabeth's Garden to make the path.
- ◇ Bradwell Court has an open plant-up day session with residents and volunteers.
- ◇ Grass and hedge cutting, deadheading, weeding, watering and litter picking works ongoing.
- ◇ Tatton team plant their blooming border at RHS Tatton Show- awarded a Silver Gilt.
- ◇ Judging Day for Congleton's IYN's.
- ◇ FoCP Clean up in the park- cleaning, planting and weeding.
- ◇ Wheelbarrows collected and brought to the park to be judged by local horticultural society and displayed for the NWIB judges.
- ◇ Last minute tidying up and litter picking before the North West judges arrive.

It's Your Neighbourhood

All the Congleton neighbourhoods work together to make Congleton "Blooming Marvellous"



Youth In Bloom

Eco Schools Project- Congleton has one of the biggest clusters of Eco Schools in the North West, all 16 schools are registered with the RHS campaign for school gardening with awards at various levels. 13 of these schools have been awarded green flag from KBT Eco-schools, four of which have received five green flags each. Their eco topics include school grounds, biodiversity, healthy living, water, litter and waste. Out of the 16 Primary and Secondary Schools in Congleton, one of them became joint Winner of the Cheshire East JRO finals after two years as runner up. The major project was harvesting one tonne of excess apples some donated to Congleton Sustainability Group, some made into Saint Mary's Apple Juice and cider. They were awarded best set of recycling materials out of 60 schools in Cheshire East having made 368 bottles of their own apple juice. Another primary school won an award for wildlife equipment from Learning from Landscapes. Our Eco-schools are passionate about recycling, no litter, improving school grounds and gardening in school and out in the community.



Every November and May, children from the local primary schools are invited to the town's polytunnels to learn about gardening and they help to plant the 30 school tubs used to decorate the Town Centre.

Back2Back Gardens- The 2019 theme is Birds. For the past six years the polytunnels complex has housed Congleton's young people's garden exhibition. Pre-schools, Primary Schools, Brownies, Beavers, Cubs and other youth groups design and create gardens and displays.



Wheelbarrow Challenge- New project this year for CIB, local Horticultural Society asked Patti if local schools might be interested in planting up wheelbarrows, after seeing this at Southport Flower Show in 2018. Patti found sponsorship from the William Dean Trust, then asked many school and nurseries to take part. We now have 17 fabulous barrows which will be shown in the park. This project has included 550 young people with a number of adults helping the nursery children aged 2-4 years.



As part of IYN Bromley Farm, it was proposed that Bradwell Court gardens needed a makeover. In Bloom team members met with Home Manager & activities lady to work out what could be done. From there a programme of garden sessions were decided. Friends & relatives were invited to help the residents, along with Bromley Farm Youth Group. Planters were repainted, beds weeded and dug over, a path to the greenhouse was laid, new compost added, plants donated. Intergenerational work is also ongoing at Astbury Mere Care Home with Black Firs Primary School and Heathview Care Home with The Quinta Primary School.

Businesses In Bloom

As well as the support from the businesses in and around Congleton, buying the Hanging Baskets and contributing to sponsoring In Bloom, there are also businesses that enter the competition with their own In Bloom efforts. Astbury Mere Care Home hold x3 GOLD awards, as does Alexandra Court Hotel.

Another business that contributes towards In Bloom projects has been Graham Construction. Graham Construction have been contracted to carry out the works for Congleton's Link Road, which started in spring 2019 and is due to finish winter 2020. Throughout this project Graham have been keen to engage with the community and local schools. One of their latest engagements has been to help create an allotment at Marlfields Primary School. A CIB member worked with a pupil to design the allotment and Graham have carried out the works as per the drawing. The school children and local community will maintain and develop the allotment for years to come.

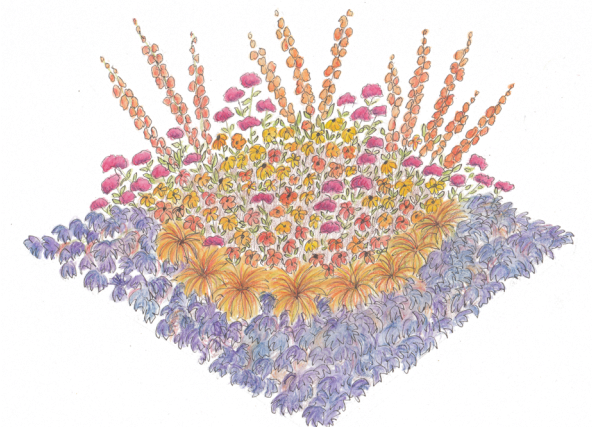


Future Projects

- ◇ **Wildflower Verges-** work with Cheshire Wildlife Trust and Plantlife to see strips of verges filled with Wildflowers.
- ◇ **Social Prescribing-** working with local health centres on the benefits of working as part of a team and out in the open.
- ◇ **Woodland & Bulb Planting-** working with Graham Construction and volunteers to replant the woodland that has been taken up due to the new Congleton Link Road— bulb planting will feature along this new road too.

RHS Tatton

Following the creation of a successful Blooming Border which was awarded a Silver medal at RHS Tatton in 2018, Patti got a new team of five ladies together to design and grow another for 2019. The team were delighted with a SILVER GILT medal awarded last week. CIB and Eco-Learning sponsored this border. The team have recreated the border near the polytunnels at the park. The border will be on show to the public throughout weekends in August & September.



Improving a Town

Over the past 21 years Congleton in Bloom and its partner organisations have physically transformed many parts of the town. This has had multiple benefits – increasing Community Pride, helping people to make friends and feel part of the town, at the same time as learning new skills and gaining confidence.

Congleton In Bloom is one of the biggest and longest lasting community campaigns in Congleton. The group was set up by volunteers in 1998 and run fully on volunteer power until 2011. It was a campaign that the Town Council wanted to see continue and so agreed to take a more active role as this is a great way to work with the community.

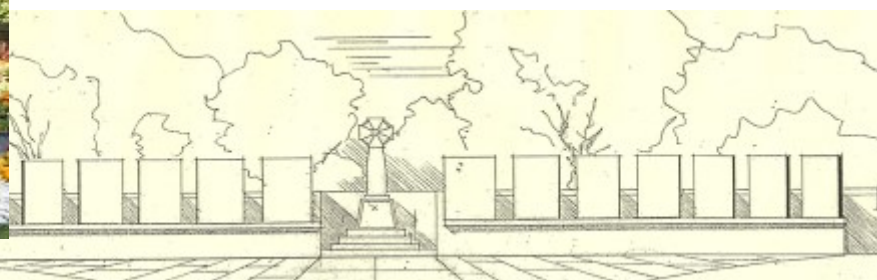
In 2000 Congleton won best large town in the North West: A huge motivating factor pushing the town to achieve more and do more. Each year the In Bloom team looks to improve new areas and then maintain this improvement. In Bloom has been responsible for so much change that much of it has just become part of Congleton.



Congleton Town Centre has benefited from a £1 million Public Realm improvement scheme. This has seen new street furniture, lighting and paving, as well as new planting opportunities. Although footfall was reduced during the works, the town centre is now attracting more people. Occupancy rates for the town centre are at 90%.



Cenotaph- Planning permission has been granted for a £225k renovation of this site. Works include adding more plaques at the site to include the 250 missing names. It will also improve accessibility and the general aesthetics of the area. The Streetscape team are currently responsible for the maintenance and planting up of the site.



Where and What	Key Facts
Buglawton In Bloom	New team with new ideas. The group has been concentrating on the area outside the Church House in Buglawton. There has been sustainable planting and a wildflower area added with a bug hotel.
West Heath Roundabout	Biodiversity enhanced by spring bulbs planted in autumn 2018. Crocuses began flowering in February, followed by; Daffodils, Tulips and Alliums.
Congleton Park	At the start of May, Congleton Park had a bee hive installed. This is situated at top of the riverbank, behind the polytunnels and can be seen from the Pavilion bridge. This is part of an initiative to help save the bees! In the future, the In Bloom team would like to see this become an educational activity for schools. December 2018, 100 ferns were planted by Friends of Congleton Park.
Mountbatten Way	Sponsored by Congleton Partnership. The troughs along Mountbatten Way were planted for the first time with winter bedding and sustainable planting– the plants will be kept for 2019 winter planting.
West Street Rose Border	Members of the In Bloom team planted this area with a group of children in December 2013. A local resident has maintained this area. 12 new roses added this year to extend the bed. The local Town Trust agreed to pay and install a watering system to help the upkeep of this area. More volunteers now help to look after the area, it benefitted from old compost from the 2018 B2B gardens.
Back to Back Gardens	The Back2Back Gardens have been part of In Bloom for 6 years, the 2019 theme is BIRDS. The polytunnels in the park will be filled with mini gardens, each group having a different bird to focus on. Age range 2-20 years.
Elizabeth's Garden	This project started in 2018 with Congleton In Bloom and the fire cadets to create a Suffragette Garden. In spring 2019 work commenced with the fire cadets and U3A garden group. A local farmer donated 4 tonnes of top soil and the garden has now been planted and renamed the Elizabeth's Garden to honour Congleton's own Suffragist: Elizabeth Wolstenholme Elmy. Local William Dean Trust have sponsored this garden. Behind the garden the West Road play park has recently been renovated.
Food 4 Free	The garden at the bottom of Capitol Walk has been weeded and dug out, with a lot of volunteer work carried to plant the herbs and edible plants. A sign has been added to this area to inform what is planted and to encourage people to try them.
U3A Garden Group	New for 2019, this gardening group adopted three CIB sites and have been working on them weekly since March.



Horticultural Excellence

Throughout the year, Congleton hosts a lot of events, the colourful and attractive floral displays along with the town centre bunting creates a fun, festival feel to the town. The routes into town are lined with brightly coloured plants, with troughs adorning the centre of Mountbatten Way.



Congleton Park- The Park is maintained by Congleton Town Council's Streetscape team with help from the Friends of Congleton Park. The Streetscape team is made up of 12 operatives, with one full-time apprentice, the team do a great job watering, deadheading and weeding public places, this along with litter picking and public bin emptying. In the park they are responsible for the planting, which over the years has seen more sustainable perennials added to complement the bedding displays. New rose beds and grasses have been planted, 100 ferns also planted in autumn. The allotment has an established herb garden— designed and maintained by the Streetscape staff. Sustainable planting has been added at the sides of the park, which leads to a new seating structure in honour of the founder and great supporter of Congleton In Bloom, Margaret Williamson MBE DL. Other public areas are re-planted twice a year, so there are only four weeks in the year without plants. Several areas have been converted to sustainable planting to provide year round colour, reduce work load and attract pollinators, especially bees, which is now helped by the hives in the park.

Below are areas that are mostly managed by volunteers:

Congleton Community Garden- Planted and maintained by volunteers, including the U3A gardening group. The garden has won many awards. It is planted with a huge variety of trees, shrubs, hardy perennials, bulbs and has over 20 species of roses in the “scented” garden.

Dutch Wall- Adding colour and hardy plants, this area is looked after by a volunteer.

Margaret's Place- This public open space was renovated in 2015 adding perennials, shrubs, an apple core sculpture, soft fruit bushes and trees and bee-friendly bedding as well as outdoor gym equipment. Signage was added in 2016. Now looked after by the U3A gardening group.

Moody Street Garden- This area has had a make-over with new surfacing and furniture. A sensory garden has been planted by local nursery groups and is a calm, sensory retreat in town.

Mountbatten Way- 100 troughs and 78 half-moon planters line the centre and outer edges of the road. Thanks to the Congleton Partnership project, there are now 17 trees in total.

Roundabouts- Congleton has a reputation for fantastic roundabout designs. Three with seasonal bedding plants and two with sustainable planting, including new spring bulb circle. Signs have been added to show off Congleton as a Gold In Bloom town.

Congleton & District Horticultural Society- Over 50 years old, the group has monthly meetings, open to the public with an annual show in September at the Town Hall, where local people display over 140 varieties of plants, flowers, fruit, veg and handicrafts. A record number of young gardeners were presented with awards in 2018.

Other areas include Astbury Mere Country Park, Congleton Churches, Congleton Canal, Railway Station, the Secret Garden at the Old Saw Mill and the Buglawton “green” area in front of the Church House, also other Congleton Public Houses.

Community Participation

Congleton has over 150 local groups and organisations and a full programme of events throughout the year. Creating a sense of place and an atmosphere of inclusion is important for the town. The In Bloom group relies on the experience, expertise and manpower of a wide range of groups and individuals all working towards a common aim of making the town a great place to live, work and visit. The In Bloom team and partners have generated well over 5,000 hours of volunteer work on In Bloom related activities. Recruitment is carried out through community newsletters, town centre activity days, Facebook & Twitter advertising, workshops, school visits and word of mouth. Certificates are awarded at an Annual Thank-You event in the Town Hall. Friends of Congleton Park hold separate celebration events.

Development & Continuity

Congleton In Bloom, the IYNs, U3A and Food4Free provide opportunities for the public to understand choosing, planting, growing and looking after plants and areas, to create greater community pride. The group regularly asks the public to report Grot Spots and areas for improvement and actively seeks more volunteers to turn plans into action. A grot spot that has been improved is an entrance into a play park area on West Road, this was dug out by the Fire Cadets from Congleton Fire Station and replanted to create a garden to honour the Suffragette movement and local Congleton Suffragist- Elizabeth Wolstenholme Elmy.

Bath House & Physic Garden- A volunteer group was formed to renovate the old garden and Bath House. The team of 12 meet weekly for a two hour slot to improve the area. Lots of hard landscaping in Winter 2016 and Spring 2017 took place as well as new planting, funded by the £10,000 awarded through the Tesco “Bags of Help” scheme. The IYN hosts open days and tours, as well as now being a venue for the annual Hidden Places arts performances. The BHPG team are delighted to have rainwater harvesting installed.

Congleton Food4Free- A dedicated group of volunteers began the Congleton Food4Free initiative back in 2012 with blueberry bushes, since then the garden at Capitol Walk has been transformed with edible and bee-friendly planting, autumnal perennials were planted to provide all year round colour.

Old Saw Mill Secret Garden- In April 2016 this was a derelict area and rescued for the Old Saw Mill's open day in May 2016. A group of volunteers have worked tirelessly to renovate the area. The garden was designed based loosely on Jekka McVik's Apothecary garden at Chelsea.

Vale Allotments- Bought by Congleton Green Spaces Trust and supported by a campaign led by Congleton Sustainability Group, the allotments are in the process of being returned as town allotments.

Community Orchard- Congleton now has five Community Orchards; Astbury Mere Country Park, New Life Church, Fairground Car Park, Hillary Avenue Allotments and Tesco. Congleton Rangers have regularly helped at the Astbury Mere Orchard throughout May and June.



Environmental Responsibility

Conservation & Biodiversity

Astbury Mere Country Park and Eco Centre- Astbury Mere is a former silica sand quarry that has been transformed into a much loved Country Park, managed by a volunteer trust with paid Countryside Ranger Support. The land covers 14hs of open space– which includes a wildflower meadow, pond, all weather easy access path and Cheshire’s first and only Keep Britain Tidy Eco Centre. The majority of tree stock is less than 40 years old. The site has been awarded multiple green flags and is one of the most visited free attractions in the North West. The trust raises £30,000 a year for upkeep of the site. Schools from around the area use the educational facilities. There is a programme of activities including; weekly Parkrun, Nordic walking, Pram Fit and Nature walks. The Congleton Sustainability Group introduced a Community Orchard in 2012 within easy walking distance of the Mere, in spring 2016, this was upgraded with new steps, sculpture and soft fruit under planting. A commemorative woodland and wildflower meadow for late Trustee Margaret Williamson was created at the Mere in 2016 by volunteers. The Orchard at the Mere was the first of Congleton’s community orchards. This is currently looked after by the Congleton West Rangers group.

Congleton Town Wood- The Town Wood is an important biological resource in the heart of Congleton to the north of the park. It is an Ancient and Semi-Natural woodland, a 1000 year old remnant of riparian woodland, now a County SBI. Formal bound gravel paths ensure accessibility through the wood throughout the year and the park wardens along with volunteer teams ensure the paths are kept clear. During the spring there is a superb display of native bluebells, local people can find out more through organised walks and talks. Numerous bird species can be observed in the wood and new bird boxes have been added, along with an interpretation board.

Dane-In-Shaw Pasture- This is an SSSI with grassland of national importance. It is managed by Cheshire East Countryside Rangers with support from local farmers. In 2014 it was designated a Coronation Meadow- an honour awarded to one meadow in every county. It is also a “donor” meadow, which provides seeds for the creation of new meadows at “recipient” sites in Cheshire, including nearby Swettenham Meadows.

Wildflower Meadows- Congleton Rotary has sponsored a wildflower meadow in the park at the site of the annual Rotary Bonfire for 7 years. There are also wildflower meadows at the Mere and at many of the schools. £13,000 worth of S106 money has been earmarked to create new wildflower meadows along roadsides in 2019/20.

Congleton Park Allotments- Previously an Aviary, the park allotment was introduced in 2013 after a suggestion by the In Bloom judges. The allotment is planted by the Streetscape team, signposted and enjoyed by the public.



Congleton is taking its commitment to the environment seriously and has recently set up a Congleton Green Team and introduced bee hives to the park.

Sustainability Group- The Sustainability Group collect unwanted apples from the public to make them into apple juice and cider, this prevents the apples from going to waste. Other unwanted fruits that were donated were made into a variety of jams, jellies and chutneys. The profits from the sales of these items are ploughed back into local community projects. Teams of volunteers make juice at the Old Saw Mill weekly– for the first time, the team have experimented with making cider vinegar. Now 10 tonnes of apples per year are processed onsite at the Old Saw Mill– OSM is in its second year of being an IYN.

Reduce, Reuse, Recycle

Reduce- Converting bedding into sustainable planting

Reuse- Spring and Winter bedding plants used in other areas, these get offered to member of the public to over-winter. Any plants not taken are used for composting. In Congleton Park, the sustainability group built a compost bin from old pallets, sited at the park allotment. The planters that have been replaced in the Town Centre and along Mountbatten Way, have been reused by local groups who have purchased the planters and re-planted to bring some colour to their areas– groups include: Bromley Farm In Bloom, Daneside Theatre, the Old Saw Mill, residents in Mossley.

Recycle- All households have “silver” recycling bins collected every two weeks, 87% of waste taken to the household amenity centre is recycled. This is less than 5% landfill. Dual bins in the town centre and park incorporate separate sections for recycling and general waste.

Local Heritage

Congleton Park- Originally designed in 1871 by Edward Kemp. September 2017 marked Kemp’s bicentenary, the Friends of Congleton Park team celebrated this with a guided tour around the park in his name. Plans for 150th Anniversary in 2021– plans by Friends of Congleton Park.

Congleton Bath House & Physic Garden- Introducing plants used for medicinal and industry purposes in Congleton since the 18th Century and protecting the heritage.

Congleton Bears- Congleton is nicknamed “Bear Town” from the 17th Century when according to legend Congleton Rare, Congleton Rare, Sold the Bible to Buy a Bear! You’ll see bear references all around the town- including the bears on the main roundabout.

Treo Statue- Statue erected in 2018 to a local war hero dog “Treo” funds raised by local people to honour this award winning dog.

Elizabeth’s Garden- The project in this area has been planted using Green, White and Violet plants– an acronym for “Give Women the Vote” as this area is tribute to our own Congleton Suffragist Elizabeth Wolstenholme Elmy.