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20 November 2015

Councillor Eileen Burt,
Chair, Prudhoe Town Council
58 Front Street
PRUDHOE NE42 5AA

Dear Councillor Burt,

Northumbria in Bloom 2015

I was surprised and concerned to receive your letter of 11 November, expressing the dissatisfaction of the sub-committee Group of Prudhoe Town Council with the Northumbria in Bloom judging report for this year.

I have read the report carefully, and also asked a National Britain in Bloom judge to do the same. Having discussed it at length, we both think that this is a very positive and constructive report, giving full credit to all the achievements of the Group and the residents of Prudhoe, and making suggestions for future development.

The summary of Prudhoe is fulsome in its praise, and ends by saying “The overall impression is of a bright, tidy and cared-for town, with well-used and appreciated public, green spaces and facilities, a high standard entry which meets the judging criteria and objectives of the competition, including sections of high standard, with the potential to be a Gold Medal winner in the future” (my underlining).

In our marking sheet the judges are given spaces to highlight all the achievements of an entry in each of the core sections, Horticultural Achievement, Environmental Responsibility and Community Participation, which they have done at exceptional length for Prudhoe.

There is also a section for them to suggest areas for improvement. These are never intended to be negative or patronising criticisms, but simply helpful guidance towards achieving higher Bloom standards. I believe that is what the judges have given you – their own suggestions which could help you to move up to the Gold level. It is entirely up to an entry whether or not they wish to take the advice.

I am very concerned that you have interpreted these suggestions as “inappropriate, inaccurate, patronising and wrong”. I hope you will be able to reconsider the judges' comments in the light of what I have told you.

We are pleased that Prudhoe has re-entered the competition, and hope that you will continue to be part of the campaign. The year-round efforts of an entry are the legacy of the Bloom competition.

Finally, I am sorry that the Prudhoe party did not enjoy the Presentations ceremony in Berwick. That is a shame because we have passed on many words of appreciation to the members of Berwick in Bloom who kindly helped to arrange the event and the hospitality. I hope that if you decide to enter the competition in 2016 you will find the Lancastrian Suite in Gateshead more amenable for you.

Yours sincerely

EILEEN BURN
Chairman