

## Usk in Bloom - Press release 20/9/16

Usk in Bloom have **retained their Wales in Bloom Large Village crown** after bouncing back after the disappointment of being runners up in last summer's Britain in Bloom Champion of Champions section. 130 volunteers from around Wales gathered for the Annual awards presentation event this year held in Prestatyn. Cllr Chair Ann Davies Chairman of Denbighshire County Council presented the gold standard award to Usk's Chairman Tony Kear with volunteers Marion Powell and Ally Williams.

Remarkably this is **the 35<sup>th</sup> year in a row that Usk have won their category** (under 2500 registered electorate) and their 5<sup>th</sup> consecutive gold standard also. The marks awarded by Judge John Woods were Usk's highest for 8 years and covered three main areas of horticultural achievement, Environmental responsibility and community participation.

**Mr Woods commented in his report** " *It was a great pleasure to visit Usk in our capacity as Class 6 judges this year. We were very impressed by the infectious enthusiasm to participate that was clearly evident throughout Usk in spite of the disappointment experienced in the Britain in Bloom Finals in 2015. Well done indeed. The standard of your entry was consistently good throughout, and we are delighted to award Usk the Wales in Bloom 2016 Large Village Trophy and that at GOLD standard! Very many congratulations to everyone who contributed in whatever way to your success.*"

**Tony Kear commented** " *Our team and absolutely delighted with the result and such highly complementary words from the judges which truly recognised the massive all round effort from the whole of the town in so many aspects of the judging criteria. We have been particularly pleased with the quality of the floral displays and especially the 250 sqm of wild flowers which were sown after being sponsored by Shaun Evans-Paske of Untethered Limited without whose support meant we would have been cutting grass! Over 40 organisations have been involved in putting together our summer of flowers in addition to the steadfast support of Usk Town Council and the members of Usk's Chamber of Commerce. There is no doubt the work of our volunteers helps the economy of Usk and we will be looking to build on that with the support of Monmouthshire County Council and their tourism team. I would like to also congratulate and pay tribute to Usk Church in Wales Primary School for their quite remarkable efforts in transforming their school gardens and indeed curriculum. Led by Kay Peacock and the "Garden Gang" but supported by Head Teacher Victoria Evans they thoroughly deserved their victory in the schools competition winning by the narrowest of margins. "*

Usk in Bloom have been rewarded for their success by receiving an invitation to take part in the 2017 Britain in Bloom competition. A decision on that will be taken over the coming weeks.

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