



SOUTH WEST

# Britain in Bloom - South West Spring Newsletter 2025



## 2025 Presentation at Torquay sponsored by SWISCo

Established in 2020, Southwest Integrated Services Company (SWISCo) manages statutory services throughout Torbay on behalf of Torbay Council. Since its inception, at the height of the pandemic, the company has gone from strength to strength, growing year on year.



SWISCo's re-designed and rejuvenated eye-catching and blooming planting schemes at the Italian Gardens on Torquay's seafront.

SWISCo are the Lead Sponsor of our 2025 Awards Presentation. taking place at the Riviera International Centre in Torquay on Wednesday 8th October.

**Awards Presentation 2025**  
**The Riviera Centre, Torquay**  
**Wednesday 8th October**  
**Cabaret seating for both Presentation & Lunch**  
**Cost £30 per Delegate**  
**Closing date for bookings: Friday 12th September**  
**Parking available at the Riviera Centre**



Torbay  
Bowling  
Club



Torre Abbey  
Refreshments

Restaurants  
 “Otto”  
 “21”

**PRESENTATION ITINERARY (Provisional)**

- 09.30am *Registration and refreshments*
- 10.00 am *Welcome by Jon Wheatley and The Mayor of Torbay*
- 10.15 am *‘Plants, Pelicans & Palaces’ Guest Speaker: Mark Wasilewski*
- 11.15 am *Comfort Break*
- 11.30 am *Children’s Painting Competition Results*
- 11.45 am *IYN & IYS Showcase Tribute*
- 12.45 pm *Lunch*
- 2.15 pm ***South West in Bloom Awards***
- 4.15pm *Closing by Jon Wheatley*
- 4.30 pm *Judges Surgeries for Main Competition Entries*

**RHS South West in Bloom Awards Presentation Day at Torquay.**

**Tickets £30 and allocated on a first come first served basis. Booking form enclosed with this newsletter and also available to download from our website.**

**Mark Wasilewski LVO**  
**Manager of St James's Park & The Green Park**

Having embarked on a horticultural career in 1978 working for the Somerset Health Authority, Mark joined The Royal Parks in 1989 as propagator and nursery manager at Greenwich Park, before working at The Regent's Park and subsequently becoming park manager of St James's Park and The Green Park in 2002.

His position sees him looking after one of Europe's busiest parks attracting some 17 million visitors per year. St James's Park is known for its displays of spring bulbs, floriferous borders, and intricate summer bedding schemes. The lake is home to many species of waterfowl and has been a home to pelicans since 1664. His responsibilities also include management of The Mall and Horse Guards Parade, both scenes of annual ceremonial events such as State Visits and Trooping the Colour, and a major element of his role is in event planning.

The Mall hosts the finish of the London Marathon, and the park has been the venue for Tour de France and the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games, which saw the Beach Volleyball stadium located on Horse Guards Parade. Half a million people are estimated to have visited St James's Park on the day of the wedding of Prince William to Kate Middleton in 2011, and in excess of a million visitors took part in the Queen's Diamond Jubilee Celebrations in 2012. In 2022 the Park played a major role in the Platinum Jubilee Celebrations and later in the year the public funeral arrangements of Queen Elizabeth II, and the King's Coronation Procession in 2023.

Mark is a former Trustee of London in Bloom and has served on the RHS Britain in Bloom national judging panel between 2004 and 2018, and again in 2024. Mark judges several London-based competitions and is a member of the Guild of Horticultural Judges.

He served on the RHS Herbaceous Plant Committee between 2015-2020, and is a member of the RHS Floral Judging Panel which sees him judging, among others, shows such as Chelsea and Hampton Court.

Appointed a Member of The Royal Victorian Order in 2013 for his services to The Royal Parks for the Queen's Diamond Jubilee, he was invested as a Lieutenant of the Order in 2023 for his services to the Queen's Platinum Jubilee.

Mark was granted the Freedom of the City of London in September 2024



## 2024 Pride in Park Awards

NAME OF PARK/OPEN SPACE	TOWN/VILLAGE	AWARD
<b>Bristol , South Gloucs &amp; Wiltshire</b>		
Mundy Playing Fields	Thornbury	4 STAR
John Coles Park	Chippenham	4 STAR
Stanley Park	Chippenham	5 STAR
Keynsham Pocket Park	Keynsham	5 STAR
Barton Farm Country Park	Bradford on Avon	5 STAR
Poulton Park	Bradford on Avon	5 STAR
<b>Somerset &amp; North Somerset</b>		
Yeovil Country Park	Yeovil	5 STAR
Collett Park	Shepton Mallett	5 STAR
Rodmoor Gardens	Portishead	5 STAR
Jubilee Park	Portishead	5 STAR
<b>Cornwall</b>		
Trenance Gardens	Newquay	5 STAR
Boscawen Park	Truro	5 STAR
Victoria Gardens	Truro	5 STAR
<b>Devon</b>		
The Glen	Honiton	4 STAR
Blackmore Gardens	Sidmouth	5 STAR
Connaught Gardens	Sidmouth	5 STAR
Glen Goyle	Sidmouth	5 STAR
Mill Marsh Park	Bovey Tracey	5 STAR
Tessier Gardens	Babbacombe	5 STAR
Memorial Recreation Ground	Kingsbridge	5 STAR
Rock Park	Exmouth	5 STAR
Manor Gardens	Exmouth	5 STAR
Phear Park	Exmouth	5 STAR
Pavilion Gardens	Exmouth	5 STAR
Seafeld Gardens	Seaton	5 STAR
Grand Western Canal Country Park	Tiverton	5 STAR
Yeo Valley Community Woodland	Barnstaple	5 STAR



## **Britain in Bloom South West Pride in Park Awards 2025.**

The parks and green spaces in the South West with the Pride in Parks Award continues to be a great success and the 2024 Awards were presented at the South West in Bloom Seminar at RHS Rosemoor on Thursday 27th March.

**Closing date for Pride in Park Entries 2025: Monday 9th June**

The judging criteria remains unchanged, and full details are available on our website. It is important that the entry is community led, and there will need to be a community representative at the judging. The time allocation can depend on the size of the park or green open space, and can be up to 2 hrs.

Please indicate on the entry form the estimated time needed to judge your entry.

Judging can take place from June until the end of the year, as often parks vary on when their displays are at their best, during the seasons. You will be able to indicate your general preference for when judging takes place, and if you have a special event that you would like judging to tie in with, we will do our best to judge it on a specific day if requested, and if sufficient notice is given. Please provide details on your entry form.

Entries are awarded one to five stars, the five star equating to a Gold Award.

**Pride In Park Entry Fee for 2025 is £30.**

**Entrants will receive an Award Certificate, together  
with a plaque to display in your Park.**

Entry forms are available to download at [southwestinbloom.org.uk](https://southwestinbloom.org.uk)  
or by emailing: [southwestinbloom1@outlook.com](mailto:southwestinbloom1@outlook.com)



Glen Goyle Park, Sidmouth



Rock Park, Barnstaple

## Greening the Gateway to the Riviera: Glendale's Work at Torquay's Riviera International Centre.

As the South West in Bloom Awards Presentation prepares to take place at the Riviera International Centre (RIC) in Torquay this October, visitors will be welcomed by an enhanced green space that reflects the town's commitment to environmental excellence. Glendale is proud to have played a key role in delivering this transformation.



Our recent work at the RIC focused on complementing the newly installed paddle tennis courts by creating a fresh, vibrant planting scheme that enhances the visitor experience.

The project involved cutting out existing turf and introducing new, thoughtfully designed shrub beds.

These feature a carefully selected mix of **Griselinia**, **Photinia**, and **Portuguese Laurel**, evergreen species chosen for their resilience, structure, and year-round appeal.

The aim was to create a welcoming green buffer that adds colour and texture to the site, providing a natural backdrop to the modern sports facilities while contributing to Torquay's broader green infrastructure.



Glendale



This improvement not only supports the aesthetic goals of the venue but also strengthens biodiversity and long-term sustainability. We're delighted that this location, now enriched with fresh planting, will serve as the venue for this year's Awards Presentation, welcoming guests with a space that reflects the core values of South West in Bloom.

Glendale is committed to maintaining and enhancing outdoor environments across the region, and the RIC project stands as a strong example of what can be achieved through thoughtful planning and skilled horticulture.





# How to Sustain and Attract Wildlife in your Community Garden this Spring



Spring is one of our favourite seasons at Amberol. It's the time of year we begin to see snowdrops make way for daffodils and early bluebells – but it's also a time for preparation. The gardeners among us will be busy potting, plotting, and planting ahead for the floral displays that will spread through the nation this summer. With [sustainable gardening](#) on the minds of many this year, why not consider ways we can plant beautiful blooms whilst sustaining and attracting wildlife?

For those involved in [Britain in Bloom](#) competitions, or community gardeners planning floral displays for a local [Railway 200](#) event, creating a sustainable environment for pollinators and the public alike could be a source of inspiration. However big or small your community garden, there are plenty of ways to make the most of this season.

We've compiled a few spring gardening ideas that combine beauty with sustainability to get you inspired this spring.

## **Planting pollinator corridors**

Is there an unused patch of ground in your community garden or local greenspace? If so, why not consider [sowing a wildflower patch](#)?

The benefits of planting wildflowers such as lavender, foxglove, bluebells, wood anemone and milkweed are not only aesthetic - they also provide essential nutrients to pollinators such as butterflies and bees. It's also an easy way to create a more vibrant ecosystem within urban landscapes.



With brighter weather in our midst, it's as easy as finding a wildflower or meadow seed mix and sowing them in a sunny spot – either directly into the ground or into containers if space is limited.

Come early summer, both pollinators and passersby will delight in the vibrant blooms.



## Small space and urban gardening



### [Amberwall](#) & [Planter Enhancement](#)

For those with limited outdoor space, there are still plenty of ways to get creative with your gardening.

Vertical gardens offer a huge array of options including flowers, fruits, or even green [‘living’ walls](#) that can transform bare surfaces into flourishing displays.

Container gardening is also a versatile option for flowers or vegetables that require a bit more management as you can always move the planters into the shade if needed.

With just a few steps, you can transform your bare courtyard into an urban oasis.

### **Vibrant colours and unusual plants**

Amberol customers are no strangers to vibrant floral displays. Take some time browsing through the stunning displays that have bloomed in Amberol planters over the years in our [customer photo gallery](#).



Wherever you are on your community gardening journey, here are some unique blooms to consider planting this spring:

[Epimedium](#)

[Primula aurantiaca](#)

[Marsh woundwort](#)

[Snowdrift](#)

[Snapdragon vine](#)

**Beehive  
Tiered  
Planter**



## Britain in Bloom 2025 UK Finalists from the South West

We have four entries representing the South West. Bath BID, Torquay In Bloom, Kingsbridge In Bloom and Thornbury In Bloom.

There is no doubt that they will all do an excellent job representing our region. Blooming Big Good Luck Wishes to you all!



City/Small City: TORQUAY



Large Town: THORNBURY



BIDS: Bath BID



Town: KINGSBRIDGE

2025 Regional Judging & IYN Assessments  
**1st July to 31st July**

## **2025 Children's Painting Competition**

The RHS have a target of becoming Biodiversity Positive for 2025, as part of their RHS Sustainability Strategy so our theme for this year's South West In Bloom Children's Painting Competition is:

### **'Blooming Biodiversity In My Community'**

Biodiversity is all the different kinds of life you'll find in one area. A variety of animals, plants, fungi, and even microorganisms like bacteria that make up our natural world. Each of these species and organisms work together in ecosystems, like an intricate web, to maintain balance and support life. We would like paintings to reflect examples of biodiversity found in your own blooming community, school garden, beach, park, green space or any other community gardening projects local to you!

**The age group categories are: Up to 6 years, 7–11 years, and 12–16 years old. Art should be a maximum of A3 in size, and only one entry per age group, per School/Bloom Group can enter, and they should be the winners of your own local competition.**

**Entry forms can be downloaded at: [southwestinbloom.org.uk](https://southwestinbloom.org.uk) or by emailing: [southwestinbloom1@outlook.com](mailto:southwestinbloom1@outlook.com). Closing date for receipt of entries: Friday 4th July. Entries to be posted to: Regional Coordinator, SWIB, 6 Main Road, Hutton, Weston-super-Mare, BS24 9QG.**

**Please note submitted entries are non-returnable unless an SAE is enclosed.**



**Closing Dates:**  
**Pride In Park Entries: Monday 9th June**  
**Award Presentation Bookings: Friday 12th September**



# Judges Training Day at Barnstaple



In South West in Bloom we are one of the few regions that hold Judges training days to ensure constituency and up to date accreditation of our Judging Team.

We hold this every other year, and this year it took place in Barnstaple on the day before our Spring Seminar.

Part of the training is a practical session, which this year involved a

short tour around Barnstaple centre organised with the help and support of Frances Bell from Barnstaple in Bloom.

We also took the opportunity while our Judges and Committee Members were together to hold both our AGM and



Committee meeting, which we otherwise hold over zoom as a cost saving. Our Judges are looking forward very much to visiting our competition entries this year and sharing with you all an enjoyable 'blooming' day!



## Important Dates for 2025

Regional Judging	<b>1st July to 31st July 2025</b>
IYN Assessments	<b>1st July to 31st July 2025</b>
Pride in Park Judging	<b>June 2025 to December 2025</b>
Business Judging	<b>June 2025 to August 2025</b>
Awards Presentation	<b>Wednesday October 8th 2025</b>
<b>At the Riviera International Centre in Torquay.</b>	

## South West In Bloom Discretionary Special Awards

South West In Bloom are delighted to continue to support the new RHS Community Awards following their successful pilot last year. Our Discretionary Award Panel will therefore, in addition to deciding our 2025 South West In Bloom Discretionary Special Award Winners, as nominated by our Judges and Assessors, will also select from our region's nominations, up to 5 entries to represent the South West for the RHS Community Awards. These are:

**RHS Community Engagement Award**

**RHS Gardening with Young People Award**

**RHS Gardening for Health & Wellbeing Award**

**RHS Sustainable Gardening Award**

**RHS Gardening for Wildlife Award**

A FAQ's produced by the RHS, covering the most frequently asked questions about the Awards, to include the criteria, nominations and the assessment process can be found on our website, under the tab '**Special Awards**'. There you will also find the full list of our own current Discretionary Special South West In Bloom Awards.

Please don't forget to encourage your Bloom and Community Groups to make our Judges and Assessors aware when they visit, if you feel your entry, group, individual, and or initiative, merits consideration for nomination for one or more of our Discretionary Special Awards, and of course, for any of the new RHS Community Awards too!

Good luck Everyone!



Remember to share and #southwestinbloom in your socials, to help us spread the message about all the blooming fantastic projects and schemes, communities, groups and neighbourhoods, we have here in the South West! @southwestinbloom.



## Judging criteria for discretionary award

We are looking for NEW projects for 2025

Projects could be: hedgerow creation, tree planting, establishing a wildflower meadow, wetland creation, creating a pond, wilding a landscape or garden, orchard creation or restoration.

Each NEW project needs to demonstrate end to end sustainability, shown by:

- Management plan with details of how it will be maintained to cover:
- Plants that are suitable to the soil
- Use of sustainable plant pots
- Use of natural compost or peat free if purchased.
- Native plants to the area (e.g., hedge that has similar plants to local hedgerows)
- Watering plan using collected rainwater.
- Use of traditional hand tools

## Community Involvement with the NEW project

Projects which reach out to underrepresented communities or those that have had little access to the countryside and nature are especially welcome.

To find out about CPRE in your area, visit:  
[www.cpre.org.uk/about-us/who-we-are/local-groups/](http://www.cpre.org.uk/about-us/who-we-are/local-groups/)







The  
countryside  
charity

# CPRE South West Environmental Award 2025

## How to enter

It's simple!

If your entry for the main competition in 2025 has a NEW project that is covered by the criteria, please let the judges know on your judging day. You can send them a short text with pictures to support your project.

The RHS team will then send a summary of the entries to CPRE who will then judge the entries for the discretionary award in October.

To inspire you, here are our most recent winners:

**2023 Winner**

Haselbury Plucknett, Somerset



Volunteers planted 1500 trees on farmland and created a bee highway.

**2024 winner**

Exmouth Tiny Forest, Devon



Volunteers of all ages planted trees in the corner of the playing field and are now maintaining and nurturing them.

## Spring Seminar 2025 at RHS Rosemoor.

This year we returned to the beautiful venue of RHS Rosemoor for our Spring Seminar which took place on Thursday 27th March. Much prepared plans for the day started to go awry when our key Guest Speaker Mark Wasilewski was unable to attend due to last minute family commitments. Our Vice Chairman, Rich Budge therefore at the last minute had to stand in, with a talk on his experience of Bloom and the Nationals as both a National Bloom Judge and too as a member of Truro in Bloom, a past National entry representing the South West.



Things unfortunately went further awry when our Chairman Jon Wheatley, was too also unable to attend, following his wife Jane taking a fall and being rushed into hospital. Fortunately, we are pleased to hear Jane is recovering well.

Our Seminar day therefore started with a warm welcome from Jon Webster, Curator at RHS Rosemoor, followed by our first guest speaker Jon Walton, CEO of Plymouth Waterfront Partnership. He covered a very good presentation on the many benefit that BID's can bring, not only to our towns and cities

but also by working in partnership with our Bloom Groups across the South West.

This was then followed by a talk from Tim Fildes, Head of UPW (South), who provided an informative presentation on the benefits of community payback workers, who can potentially help to fill that ever increasing void in getting volunteer workers to assist and support community groups, particularly with some of their larger projects and tasks they face completing.

The afternoon then moved on to a session providing guidance and advice, focussing on how best Bloom Groups should go about organising their entry, with tips and hints to ensure that all of the judging category and criteria elements are covered. Two of our National South West in Bloom Judges, Rich Budge and Nick Jones led this session, taking up the challenge standing in for Jon. They helpfully also covered how important it is to manage and plan every detail of the tour, making it as interesting and as formative for the Judges as possible.



The afternoon then concluded with the Presentation of the 2024 Pride in Parks Awards.



Victoria Gardens Truro 5 Stars



Tessier Gardens, Babbacombe Bay 5 Stars



Glen Goyle, Connaught Gardens & Blackmore  
Gardens all in Sidmouth - 5 Stars



Pavilion Gardens, Phear Park, Manor Gardens  
all in Exmouth - 5 Stars



Yeovil Country Park 5 Stars



Rock Park, Barnstaple 5 Stars

Our thanks go to Nigel Bloxham for taking the photos at our Spring Seminar.  
Photos of the Parks Presentation are available to view and order on Nigel's  
website: <http://www.ukphotogallery.com>



# Based here in the UK we have over 150 years manufacturing experience.

Legacy  
Planters

Here at geViews we are a specialist British Manufacturer of High Quality, Hardwearing, Low Maintenance Planters and Street Furniture. We combine great looks, with meticulous attention to detail and the best possible build quality.

Based in the Midlands we have over 150 years of manufacturing experience! Our highly skilled designers and engineers can make a product bespoke to your needs in a variety of materials, or you can choose from our extensive range of stocked Planters.

From our Self-Watering Planters, Hanging Baskets and Barrier Baskets to our Pagoda Display Boards, Noticeboards and Benches, ALL of our range has been developed to offer premium quality, long life, great value for money, minimum maintenance... And to be 100% recyclable.

The geViews range has been designed to perfectly suit In Bloom displays, Street Scene projects, Open Space schemes and Public Space programmes.



Self-watering



100% recyclable



Long life



Bespoke sizes



Sustainable timber



Low maintenance



Oak  
Newforest  
Planter



geViews  
Barrier  
Basket

Optional  
Pagoda  
Tower  
display  
board



Pagoda  
Tower



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## Join Butterfly Conservation's Big Butterfly Count and help protect our precious pollinators! 18 July – 10 August 2025.



This summer, nature is calling and it needs your help. Butterfly Conservation's Big Butterfly Count is back, and it's a fantastic opportunity for groups and individuals to get involved in protecting our precious pollinators.

This nationwide citizen science survey invites everyone to spend just 15 minutes in a green space counting butterflies and day-flying moths. Whether you're in a park, garden, or community allotment, your sightings can make a big difference.

Butterflies are not only a delight to see, they're also vital indicators of a healthy environment. Their presence (or absence) tells us a great deal about the state of nature around us. Sadly, many butterfly species are in decline, largely due to habitat loss and climate change. By taking part in the Big Butterfly Count, you'll be helping scientists track how populations are changing and informing conservation efforts to protect them.

So, gather your group, head outside, and become a butterfly spotter! Not only will you be contributing to vital scientific research, but you'll also be reconnecting with the natural world – something we could all use a little more of.

Let's make this year's count the biggest and most impactful yet.

Visit [www.bigbutterflycount.org](http://www.bigbutterflycount.org) to get started.



Common Blue

## **Edible Gardens**

Why not consider integrating a vibrant flower border with edible plants such as kale or carrots this spring? The mixture of textures and colours will not only look fantastic but ultimately help build a community garden that is both sustainable and visually pleasing.

For those with limited outdoor space, planting crops in containers is an effective way to start your edible garden – and could be especially delightful for young people to get involved with. However, it's best to plan for the type of crops that will go in the planters as some will need more space for their roots to grow.

[Hanging baskets](#) are suitable for crops such as strawberries and tomatoes, whilst [window or barrier boxes](#) are a good fit for salads and leaves with shallow roots, and [deeper and wider planters](#) are a great option for potatoes.



Amberol's [self-watering planter range](#) is ideal for growing vegetables, since the dispersal matting distributes water evenly to the compost overlaying it, always keeping it moist.

For larger fruit trees or shrubs, try our [Large Floor Standing Planters](#).

### **Amberol can support your community gardening project**

Amberol products have long formed an important part of many community projects, including [Britain in Bloom finalists and winners](#) over the years. Our products are sustainable by design using recycled or recyclable materials, and our self-watering planters help conserve water and reduce maintenance demands.

### **Get in touch**

**Call 01773 830 930 or email [sales@amberol.co.uk](mailto:sales@amberol.co.uk)** for more information on Amberol's products, or to arrange a personalised no-obligation virtual demo to see our products up close and personal.



## **Conserving Water in a Warming Climate**

Hot spells during the late spring and summer months can affect how well the plants in your garden grow. They may also require a lot more water to sustain, which can have a knock-on effect on wildlife. While it's a good idea to select hardy plants that can weather a warmer climate, there are other ways to conserve water whilst making sure your flowers, fruit or vegetables thrive. Laying [mulch](#) around your garden can help soil retain moisture and ultimately reduce the amount of time spent watering.

If you are planting in containers, this is where the self-watering feature of Amberol planters can really make a difference to the health of your plants and wildlife. Proud originators of the [Aquafeed™ self-watering system](#), our low-maintenance planter range features capillary matting that frees up users to water plants only once or twice a week – saving time, water, and money.

Unlike other materials such as terracotta or metal which easily dry out, expand and crack, all our products are made using a long-lasting durable polyethylene material that can withstand hot and cold temperatures, which makes it ideal for flowers and foliage. They are also 100% recyclable at the end of use, with black products made of recycled polyethylene.

**[View Amberol's sustainable self-watering planters that save time, water and money.](#)**



**[Full Barrier Basket](#)**



**[Cup & Saucer Hanging Basket](#)**

# **Glendale Wins National Recognition as Grounds Maintenance Company of the Year**

## **Supreme Winner – Pro Landscaper Business Awards 2025**

Glendale Countryside Ltd is proud to announce its recent success at the **Pro Landscaper Business Awards**, where the company was named both *Grounds Maintenance Company of the Year* and the overall *Supreme Winner*.

These national awards recognise excellence across the horticultural and landscaping industries, and Glendale's double win highlights the strength of its commitment to quality, consistency, and community impact.

The judging panel described Glendale as:

*“A very strong winner with clear direction and achievements backed up with statistical evidence.”*

They also praised the company for its:

Comprehensive training and staff development programmes

Investment in people, with impressive retention rates

Strong track record in Corporate Social Responsibility

Contributions to biodiversity, local volunteering, and sustainability

Long-term client relationships, with over a third of clients working with Glendale for more than ten years

*“Glendale Countryside is a family-owned business with a clear vision that has demonstrated all-round excellence... a dedication that extends beyond profit.”*

*– Stuart Dantzie, Award Sponsor*



Glendale

As a long-standing supporter of **South West in Bloom**, Glendale understands the value of well-maintained green spaces, not just for competitions, but for the daily lives of local residents.



**Some of the Glendale team at the Awards Ceremony**

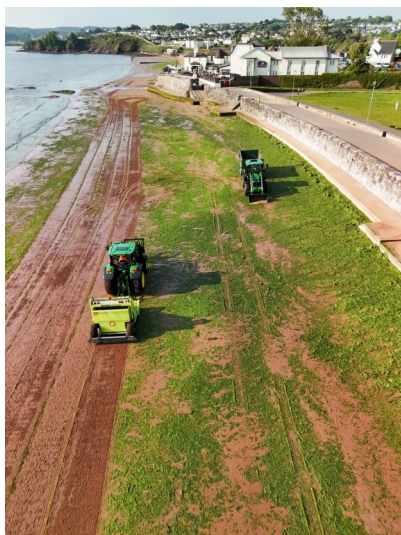
Our sponsor Glendale offers horticulture expertise including, grounds maintenance and tree surgery, landscaping & fencing and countryside contracting services.

### **Business, Leisure, Tourism & Commercial Award**

We were pleased to see a continued interest entering our Business, Leisure and Commercial 'Business' Awards in 2024. Presentation of the 2025 Awards will take place at The Riviera Centre, Torquay on the 8th October 2025, and we hope to see many of our Business entries there in person to collect their Award.

Our Judges were delighted in 2024 to see a very high standard and much enthusiasm across the Business sector in the South West for all things 'Bloom' and they will continue in 2025 to judge and base their marking of our Business entries on areas like around entrances, public facilities, the standard of maintenance and general appearance, as well as interesting and original floral displays, general landscaping and general maintenance of grassed areas. Big blooming luck to all our Business entries this year!





## SWISCO

Established in 2020, Southwest Integrated Services Company (SWISCO) manages statutory services throughout Torbay on behalf of Torbay Council. Since its inception, at the height of the pandemic, the company has gone from strength to strength, growing year on year.

It is now one of the largest employers in Torbay, delivering high-quality public services across a range of areas including recycling and waste, and the ongoing maintenance of Torbay's many streets, roads, beaches, parks and trees. In addition, there is also a commercial aspect to their business and they

offer services such as business waste and recycling, tarmacking, landscaping and printing.

2024 also saw the arrival of Torbay's first ever Enforcement Team, deployed to tackle environmental crime in Torbay, such as dog-fouling, littering, graffiti, fly-tipping and unauthorised encampments.

The gardening department work closely with the various volunteer groups right across Torbay, from Brixham to Babbacombe. Each year when the spring bulbs are dug up, they are redistributed amongst these groups. Special bins are provided for collection of pumpkins following Halloween, and this year Swisco helped in the collection of almost 1000 used Christmas trees, with the income going to support Rowcroft Hospice.

The venue for this year's award ceremony in October is the Riviera International Centre in Torquay. Situated at the rear of the award winning Abbey Park with views out across the sea, the site is easily accessible from Torquay Station. On the day of the event, volunteers from the Friends of Torquay Station will be on hand to guide you across to the venue. There will also be plenty of free parking on site on the day, just register your number plate on entering the venue.

If you are staying overnight, there are plenty of hotels in all price ranges within easy walk of the venue, and the historic Torre Abbey with its stunning gardens is right next door.



Don't miss the wonderful walk along Torquay's seafront to the harbour, where you will find the new Agatha Christie statue. You might head over to Babbacombe with its colourful planting in the precinct and along the downs, pay a visit to the quaint village of Cockington just up from the seafront in Torquay, see the work that the largest volunteer group are doing at Paignton's Oldway Mansion, or a taste of Brixham's fishing heritage.

### **Sustainable Plants – the way forward to combat climate change.**

In 2017 the Sustainable Plant Project was set up in Torbay by Tim Eley to find plants that are hardy in our part of the world and have long flowering periods and that can survive in hot, dry conditions.

Over the next 5 years various plants were tested out in our trial grounds and in various spots in Torquay with some very good results.

Some of the best performers in the trials were:



Asteriscus – flowers all year round  
 Anisodonteas – flowers for at least 9 months  
 Arctotis  
 Salvias  
 Verbena Bampton  
 Rose campion or Silene  
 Osteospermums + many others

Torquay - Beacon Cove sustainable  
 flower bed 9<sup>th</sup> May 2025

By taking cuttings in the autumn you can have plugs available for potting in the spring.

Advantages of sustainable plants are minimum maintenance with very little watering required and long flowering periods.

Last year, national charity Butterfly Conservation declared a ‘Butterfly Emergency’ after the dire results of their Big Butterfly Count and long-term butterfly declines. And, with more than half our UK butterfly species now in long-term decline, what people, communities and councils do in their gardens and green spaces has never been more important. That’s why Butterfly Conservation launched its Wild Spaces programme, to not only inspire and enable people to connect with and enjoy the natural world, but also to take simple actions at home and in their local areas to help butterflies and moths thrive.

## *What is a Wild Space?*



Creation of a living wall as part of the Bristol Wild Spaces project

Wild Spaces are all around us. They are the flowers in our window boxes, the pots on our patios, the patches of wildflowers in our gardens or allotments, and the wildflower meadows in our churchyards and parks. They provide space for nature to thrive, and places for people to access and enjoy.

Butterfly Conservation has already worked with communities and partners to create more than 4,000 Wild Spaces but they want to create many more across the UK - in our cities, towns and villages. And they need your help.

## *How can people get involved?*

Everyone can get involved in Wild Spaces - by creating their own Wild Space or helping enhance and maintain a space in their local community.

A Wild Space can be large or small, so long as the space is improved or enhanced to help butterflies and moths. A small urban space can be transformed in a few simple steps. These might include planting wild herbs, growing food plants for caterpillars, letting some grass grow long or leaving a pile of twigs and leaves. Some of the most valuable things you can do simply involve doing nothing ... less tidying and better for wildlife!





Wild Space designed by pupils  
and teachers in Bristol

Every transformation will help make space for butterflies and moths and provide a haven for people to slow down and connect to nature. Wild Spaces should help butterflies and moths complete their lifecycles, enabling them to feed, breed and shelter; be free from pesticides; and where compost is used it should be peat free.

### ***Why is creating a Wild Space important?***

One of the major threats facing butterflies and moths in the UK is the loss and degradation of their habitats. Gardens and urban environments make up a huge proportion of land in the UK, and by making more of these areas friendly for butterflies and moths, they have a much better chance of thriving. But Wild Spaces are not only important for butterflies and moths, but

### ***Wild Spaces are also brilliant for people, too.***

We know that connecting with nature can have brilliant benefits for our mental wellbeing, and recent Butterfly Conservation research showed that counting butterflies can reduce anxiety by 9%. That's why dedicated Wild Spaces Officers are working in areas of income and green space deprivation across the UK to increase access to nature rich green spaces for local communities.

### ***Who can register a Wild Space?***

Anyone! No matter the size – balcony, garden, patio, community space – as long as it helps butterflies or moths, it's a Wild Space.

Butterfly Conservation aim to create a growing network of Wild Spaces across the UK – check out their interactive map to find Wild Spaces in your area and add your own.

If we are all inspired to act, together we can make a big difference. Please join in and register online today!

For further information or to register a space, visit: [www.wild-spaces.co.uk](http://www.wild-spaces.co.uk)

## **Vic Verrier MBE, Horticulturalist and In Bloom Ambassador**



Vic's horticultural career started at the age of 15, when he joined Taunton Deane Borough Council as an apprentice, learning his horticultural trade whilst working in the parks and studying at the same time. Vic's involvement in the In Bloom campaign started whilst he was working for the local authority entering the competition.

Vic spent 45 years working for Taunton Deane Borough Council of which 25 years of that, he spent as the Parks and Amenities Officer, significantly raising and improving the standard of Taunton and the surrounding areas.

Vic joined the South West in Bloom committee in 1983, when the competition was all about how many hanging baskets and brightly coloured bedding plants you could display within your town. Over the years this has significantly changed.

Vic served on the Committee until he was elected in 2000 as the Chairman, supported at that time by Tony Brown, as his Vice Chairman and Muriel Preece as Secretary, she was renowned and famous for a cakes she used to bring to the meeting.

Our meetings were held at the South West Tourism Office, in Exeter, who were at that time supporting the In Bloom campaign, before the RHS took over the campaign.

2000 was the year that South West in Bloom held their first ever Presentation event, in a marquee, at the then under construction Eden project in Cornwall, this opening in 2001 to visitors. In 2003 Vic was on the New Year's Eve Honours List and received a MBE for services to Horticulture and the Community of Somerset, of which he was exceptionally proud of and richly deserved.

South West in Bloom continued to grow from strength to strength under Vic's leadership and with the support of the RHS. Presentation events were held at Minehead, Bath and West Showground, Torquay and Plymouth to name but a few, each year the event getting larger and grander.

In 2009 Vic decided it was time to stand down as the chair of South West in bloom and formally stood down at the AGM in 2010. Vic was awarded at the southwest in bloom presentation, held in Yeovil, A service to Southwest in Bloom award in the form a piece of crystal and this was then topped off by being awarded an Outstanding contribution award, from the RHS, presented to him at the National Britain in bloom finals awards presentation, which that year was held in Torquay.

Vic was then appointed as the president of the South West in bloom and his loyalty and hard work continued, attending many presentation events, often undertaking the closing remarks and thanking everyone for their support in that year, with huge passion for all things bloom.

Vic also wrote regularly in the South West in Bloom newsletter, often putting in interesting information about In Bloom.

Sadly Vic's health deteriorated, which prevented him from attending the latter few Presentation events held in Truro and Bath, but was still there in spirit sending messages of good wishes to everyone. Vic ended up serving the South West in Bloom Committee a staggering 42 years.

Vic was a friend to everyone he met and always had time to stop and chat to anyone inside or outside of the In Bloom circle. He was a kind and gentle giant of a man. Vic will be sadly missed by us all at South West in Bloom, along with his In Bloom friends. Thank you Vic for all your hard work, dedication and services to the In Bloom campaign. You were the most amazing Ambassador

This Eulogy was presented by Richard Budge, Vice Chairman of South West in Bloom at Vic's Celebration of Life Service, which was held on Thursday 29th May in Taunton.

### **Chairman's Report**

I am writing this report in Dublin Airport on my way to our President's Funeral. Vic Verrier MBE encompassed everything positive about Bloom and had a real understanding of Bloom's potential in terms of Community Gardening. Vic was an advocate, dear friend and enthusiast of all things horticultural and will be greatly missed and fondly remembered.

We look forward in a positive manner to 2025 and meeting the challenges of sensitive budgets, as well as competing demands for resources.

Bloom is such a positive campaign, which in my view is a partnership initiative with locals of all ages and backgrounds.

We are supported by the world's largest gardening Charity, The Royal Horticultural Society and the excellent RHS Rosemoor Team based in the South West.

Jon Wheatley  
Chairman  
South West in Bloom

**South West In Bloom Regional Judging & IYN & IYS  
Assessments: 1st July to 31st July 2025**



## **COMPETITION ENTRIES 2025**

### **Champion of Champions 10k +**

**Jon Wheatley**

Exmouth in Bloom    Torquay in Bloom    Truro in Bloom  
Sidmouth in Bloom

### **Champion of Champions less than 10k**

**Jane Pagano**

Bere Alston in Bloom    Chew Magna in Bloom  
Kingsbridge in Bloom    Hayle in Bloom

### **South West Tourism Cup**

**Bob Sweet & Sean Fletcher**

Bath in Bloom    Exeter City in Bloom

### **Tesco Cup**

**Lesley Jelleyman & Bob Ollier**

Paignton in Bloom    South Swindon in Bloom

### **St Bridget Cup**

**Lesley Jelleyman & Ian Cawley**

Portishead in Bloom    Yeovil in Bloom  
Newquay in Bloom

### **Portman Cup**

**Terry Porter**

Wellington Town Council    Tiverton in Bloom    Brixham in Bloom  
Bloom in Melksham    Babbacombe Bay in Bloom

### **Sargent Cup**

**Richard Budge**

Minehead in Bloom    Keynsham in Bloom  
Thornbury in Bloom

### **Preece Cup**

**Camilla Bassett-Smith**

Glastonbury in Bloom    Bovey Tracey in Bloom

### **SWTA Cup**

**Rod Pooley & John Yeo**

Crediton in Bloom

### **Ayre Cup**

**Rod Pooley & John Yeo**

Cary in Bloom

### **Cox Cup**

**Rod Pooley & Catherine Mortimer**

Cannington in Bloom    Henstridge Parish Council

### **Mary Mortimer Trophy**

**Tim Ely**

Plympton St Maurice Conservation Area    Charmouth Parish Council  
Barrington in Bloom    Poltimore in Bloom  
Chew Stoke Community in Bloom    St Buryan in Bloom

### **Judging 2025**

It has become necessary for matters of expediency that in some categories of the competition this year, we are undertaking judging assessments with one Judge/Assessor

This should not affect award outcomes in any way. Both Richard and I have selected experienced and trained Judges/Assessors to undertake these duties.

RHS South West in Bloom is committed to maintaining the highest standards of judging and assessment in all of our competitions.

It would be interesting to receive your feedback at the end of the judging season. In the meantime, have a great Bloom season and thank you all in advance for your continued support and participation.

**Jon Wheatley. Chairman**

#### **Cornwall Pennant / Urban Village**

Illogan in Bloom  
Menheniot Green  
Mitchell Village

**Judges Bob Ollier & Barbara Hannan**

#### **Devon Pennant /Urban Village**

Woolwell in Bloom  
Newton St Cyres in Bloom

**Judges Bob Ollier & Barbara Hannan**

#### **Dorset Pennant/Urban Village**

Winfrith Newburgh & East Knighton

**Judges Bob Ollier & Barbara Hannan**

#### **Town Centre**

Chippenham Town Council  
Melksham Town Centre & Flags

**Judges Richard Beale  
& Martin Hambidge**

#### **BIDS**

Bath Bid  
Plymouth Waterfront Partnership

**Judges Nigel Bloxham  
& Simon Richards**

### **Important Dates for 2025**

**Regional Judging 1st July to 31st July 2025**

**IYN & IYS Assessments 1st July to 31st July 2025**

**Pride in Park Judging June 2025 to December 2025**

**Presentation Wednesday October 8th 2025**

**The Riviera Centre, Torquay**



**@southwestinbloom**  
**Please #southwestinbloom on**  
**your own socials too!**

### **Important Dates for 2025**

Regional Main Judging **1st July to 31st July 2025**  
IYN & IYS Assessments **1st July to 31st July 2025**  
Pride in Park Judging **June 2025 to December 2025**  
Business Judging **June 2025 to August 2025**  
Awards Presentation **Wednesday October 8th 2025**  
**The Riviera Centre, Torquay**

Closing Date to book Award Presentation Tickets:  
**Friday 12th September 2025**

Children's Painting Competition  
**Closing Date For Entries : Friday 4th July 2025**

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