

LANCASHIRE BEST KEPT VILLAGE COMPETITION

61st AWARDS CEREMONY - 2019

Press Briefing (14 October 2019)



The Lancashire Best Kept Village Competition held its 61st Annual Awards Ceremony at the Villa in Wrea Green on Monday 14th October. The Chairman of the organising committee, John Isherwood, welcomed the 120 guests, which included 9 mayors representing many towns and villages from all over Lancashire.

In his opening address John commented on the fact that there had been a slight reduction in the number of villages that entered the competition this year but those that did enter had a better than 1 in 2 chance of being the winners, runners up or highly commended in one or more of the award categories. These awards recognise there is something in each of these villages that makes them proud.

John reminded the guests of all the hard work that goes into the judging process and that all the judges are ordinary members of the public who volunteer because they believe in encouraging Lancashire villages to look their best. He explained how the three judging stages take place over the three months from the beginning of June until the end of August for those that make it that far. The final stage is by an invited external judge and this year it was by John Gilmore from the afternoon programme on Radio Lancashire. All the results are a closely guarded secret until revealed during the award ceremony.

Presenting the awards this year was Councillor Paul Hayhurst from Elswick, which was named the Champion of Champions last year. Paul told the audience of the immense pride that people in the village felt in being the Champion Village after trying for 50 years to win.

This year the winner of the Champion Village Class was Higham. They received a commemorative plaque, along with a trophy, a framed certificate and an oil painting of the Village Hall in Higham commissioned by Lancashire Life Magazine. The artist chosen by Lancashire Life was the winner of their Artist of the Year Competition, Ken Roberts who lives in Lytham.

The other major Whole Village awards went to Freckleton in the Large Village Class, Mawdesley in the Medium Village Class, Bretherton in the Small Village Class and Wiswell in the Hamlets Class.

There were also 15 Outstanding Features Awards for features nominated by the villages themselves which they think are the Best in Lancashire. There were 33 entries for Places of Worship and the winner was St Nicholas Church in Wrea Green. The second highest for the number of entries was for the Public House award, which had 32 entries. The winner was the Blue Anchor at Bretherton.

The third highest number of entries was for the best kept War Memorial Award. In announcing this award John Isherwood commented that the high number of entries for war memorials shows that Lancashire still remembers and honours the men and women who never returned to their villages. The joint winners were the Cenotaph in Freckleton and the War Memorial in Blacko. West Bradford came very close and was awarded Runner Up, and Highly Commended awards were given to Sabden and to Bisborrow.

A full list of all the winners can be found on the competition's website, which also includes more details and information about the competition.

www.lancashirebestkeptvillage.org.uk

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