



Best Kept Village 2026 - Update

At the full Council meeting on the 9th February it was resolved that under the auspices of the Parish Council the Community Committee would apply for inclusion in the Best Kept Village Scheme 2026 with the resolution:-

"It was resolved unanimously that the parish council support the proposal that we collaborate with the community committee on the best kept village bid for 2026".

The 2025 entry provided invaluable feedback, and it must be remembered that out of a total score of 98 over 14 different categories the village scored 86, two behind the winner.

The Community Committee are to be applauded for such a successful effort.

The Judging Notes from last year has highlighted areas of deficiency that if addressed raise the prospect of a higher score this year.

- 1. Many of the roads had weeds between the kerb and the road and between the pavement and walls giving those streets an unkempt feeling. We wondered if the council ever swept the roads or were asked to do so*
- 2. Some of the dog poo bins were old/rusty and we felt would benefit from being replaced in line with others around the village.*
- 3. There was very little litter, a little around the school and some around the bus stop on the A4 next to the Petty Lane Green and around the carpark of the Lansdown pub.*
- 4. The Petty Lane Green was neatly cut and well managed. However, the fence at the back was damaged*
- 5. The flower bed to the front of Lansdowne Hall we felt would benefit from weeding and some more plants/flowers.*
- 6. The telephone box on Church Road and the planter next to the Methodist chapel were empty/neglected.*
- 7. The Orchard is a great asset and well managed but was let down by the private parking next to it which was somewhat neglected at the orchard end.*

However, the level of engagement with third parties for some of these is beyond the reach of the Community Committee, in this regard the Parish Council can be an advocate with Wiltshire Council, local contractors or landowners as part of it's support for BKV 26.



The Council has requested a Project Plan and an estimate of potential funds required, attached is the current Project Plan, this is the latest version of a dynamic document.

Thus, there are two principal aspects that involve the Parish Council

Deficiencies in the areas being inspected

Enhancements

The principal deficiency, as can be seen from the Judging notes, relates to weeds in the footpaths, unkept verges and weeds in the road channels. Addressing this aspect will require co-ordination with Wiltshire Council.

CPRE the promoters of BKV advise involving the Parish Steward, concerning Safety and Insurance they advise on the entry form:-

Safety and Insurance

Wiltshire Council Highways Department has confirmed that villagers do not need a Street works licence for litter picking or verge tidying.

However, Parish Councils or organisers should:

- a) Check that insurance provides third-party cover for volunteers.*
- b) Provide high-visibility clothing.*
- c) Use road sentries if needed.*

Timing is the key issue, Wiltshire confirmed last year that they cannot schedule grass cutting but that it happens monthly from the start of March. They define the areas they cover on their Grounds Map (see attached), as can be seen it does not include important areas like Studley Crossroads.

Concerning verges and footways these are dealt with separately from grass cutting.

Regarding enhancements these are primarily planting to add some vibrancy to the village scene, the area and plant specification are to be determined.

Risk assessments are an aspect to address; these will broadly need to cover working near a highway or using cutting tools i.e. strimmer's or mowers. It is not intended to consider activities that are common in domestic property maintenance or the use of domestic tools. However appropriate PPE will always be required.

Timing is also a key issue when considering the issue of funds i.e. details available and the approval process. Thus it is appropriate to be more specific about the areas and actions needed.

The attached map shows the area of the village being entered into the competition.



Important areas of attention are the entrances to the Village, as these will create the first impressions for the judging team. specifically

Studley Crossroads
The Lansdowne Arms
The A4 at the Sports Ground
Old Road

At Studley Crossroads the principal areas of grass are owned by the Highways Agency, although we don't believe they maintain them. Although they are generally maintained by the good will of local residents. The attached plan shows the cadastral areas at Studley Crossroads.

If we are to ensure this area is at its best for the inspection. We need to liaise with Wiltshire about their intentions. CPRE advise we do not need a Street works Licence for litter picking or verge maintenance. Thus, we can mobilise to tidy it ourselves or it may require hiring appropriate equipment.

Concerning litter picking, the attached map shows the area Wiltshire Council cover for litter picking, currently we are unsighted on the frequency of this activity but as can be seen it is designated as Low attention.

The Lansdowne Arms is a principal entrance to Church Road, any enhancing additions at this entrance would first have to be discussed with the Leaseholder, however, would we consider suggesting a timber sleeper raised planter as an enhancement. Creating a distinct feature would provide impact.

The A4 at the Sports Ground and the entrance to Old Road are more significant areas that will require mostly effort, but some equipment may be needed.

Old Road itself, if it is to be presented as an important route connecting the village, needs more significant work in clearing the verges in places, the advice of the Parish Steward would be useful here as it may require Council equipment in the first instance.

Thus concerning funds there are some areas of specific need that still must be assessed, regarding enhancements and plants we could set a maximum budget for this expenditure to be managed by the Community Committee if we so choose.

As can be seen from the Judges Notes there are other aspects to the competition for the Community Committee to deal with, however, primarily the foregoing are those for which assistance is required.

Inevitably, keeping the verges neat requires an ongoing effort, whilst the Council will cut and trim, their schedule may not align with getting the best presentation at the time of judging.



Additionally there will need ongoing effort after the event. If we are winners, then it will be even more important toward maintaining the reputation. To this end it would be worthwhile for the Council to own an industrial strimmer. If this is decided then a member of the Council will need to be trained (as is the case for SID deployment etc) for the City & Guilds NPTC Level 2 Award in the Safe Use of Brush-cutters and Trimmers, this training is available locally.

As time is of the essence we would like to get ahead of our approval processes and make the following proposals.

1. The Council authorise Cllrs Barnes and Mison with the Clerk, to use strimmer's that are currently available to ascertain the likelihood of future requirements.
2. The Council authorise Cllrs Todd and Handyside a budget of £300, in collaboration with the Community Committee, to be expended on enhancements to the appearance of village specifically associated with the BKV26 submission. Report plans to the Financial Committee at the 31st March meeting.
3. The Council support the concept of a raised planter as an element of enhancement for the village, subject to location and cost, with a report to the Financial Committee on the 31st March clarifying detail. Delegating authority to the Committee to approve or reject any detailed proposal and report back to the full Council meeting in April.

Cllrs Handyside and McHale

28 February 2026





BKV 26 Project Plan

The following is a framework for discussion.

1. Area of Inspection same a 2025 map submission with footpaths marked.
 - Discuss any changes since then.
2. Attributes being judged in those areas.
 - Council verges
 - Church Road hotspot
 - A4 both sides between Sports Ground and last footpath Studley.
 - Who owns the grass verges either side (is Studley Mgt and Chapel St Mgt)
 - Studley crossroads
 - Green opposite Lansdowne Arms
 - Front of Lansdowne Pub
 - Residential hedge cutting especially tops of both Lansdowne Crescents
 - Village comms.
 - How do Parish and Hub websites work in harmony without overlap? Hub (community) directing to Parish (Governance).
 - inSPIRE aligned to above
 - Facebook as above
 - Currently two unofficial email databased – Kate & Peter
 - Claire W one voice oversight.
 -
 -
3. Deficiencies of those areas
 - Weeds pavement, curbs, footpaths
 - Empty plant post i.e. by the telephone box
 - Better dress Judges entry points; front of Pub and Studley crossroads
4. Over and Above enhancements
 - More flowers

Hopefully from here we can get a feel for the costs and efforts

1. Actions needed
 - Wildflower planting generally tba
 - Sports Ground managed biodiversity area (John Barnes)
 - Front of Hall (Gardening club already agreed with Hall Mgt)
2. Plants and Materials needed. Need an expert plant person, what viable?



- Get community growing seeds now – need advice?
- Wildflowers spread around – need advice?

Lay a plan for execution

1. Resources required

- Currently we have 11 PC member and 13 CC members to a lesser of greater extent.
- Area leaders. Sourcing start asap. Start action plan and prepare up to 10 May, then daily litter pick and liaising with weekly check in group during month of Judging.
- Check what tools PC already has and what extra needed. Do we need more heavy-duty machinery than previously i.e. strimmer's (John & Vaughan) sit on mower - Sarah's hubby for the grass verges the council doesn't do?
- Need some more serious labour on Church Road pavement i.e. clogged drains on top, cut earth verges back to correct width of pavement

2. Time frame for actions

3. Group together actions, resources, Plants, Materials and equipment

Then mobilisation

1. Advertising for volunteers

- Kate PC, CC member. I believe Claire W will take the role of comms overview ensuring consistency across PC and CC.

2. Timetable

- 27 March. Agree and sign off all we plan to do and include, risk assessment, check insurance cover (see Lead team below).
- Prep submission paperwork as above as a group.
- 19 April. Submit Report to CPRE.
- Weekly check-ins of all Group leaders prob via WhatsApp.
- Start planting, separate to tidy up, allowing to grow in time for May
- 3 May. Village Tidy Up all hands.
- 10 May. Complete all work ready for judging
- 11 May – 7 June. Area monitors daily check for a month.

3. Group leaders

- Who are the lead team i.e. 4/5 people to deliver BKV from PC and CC?
- Spread the responsibility more 'area' team leaders, take responsibility.

4. Meeting and Briefing

- Much clearer better briefed, better managed teams. It's not just a fun 2 hours for a bacon butty – seriously. Where's the men that did the steps?

5. Execution.



- I think John is our only trained/qualified H&S person for Risk and Insurance purposes. There must be more.

With this understanding we can identify potential hazards based on who is doing what, why it is being done and where and when.

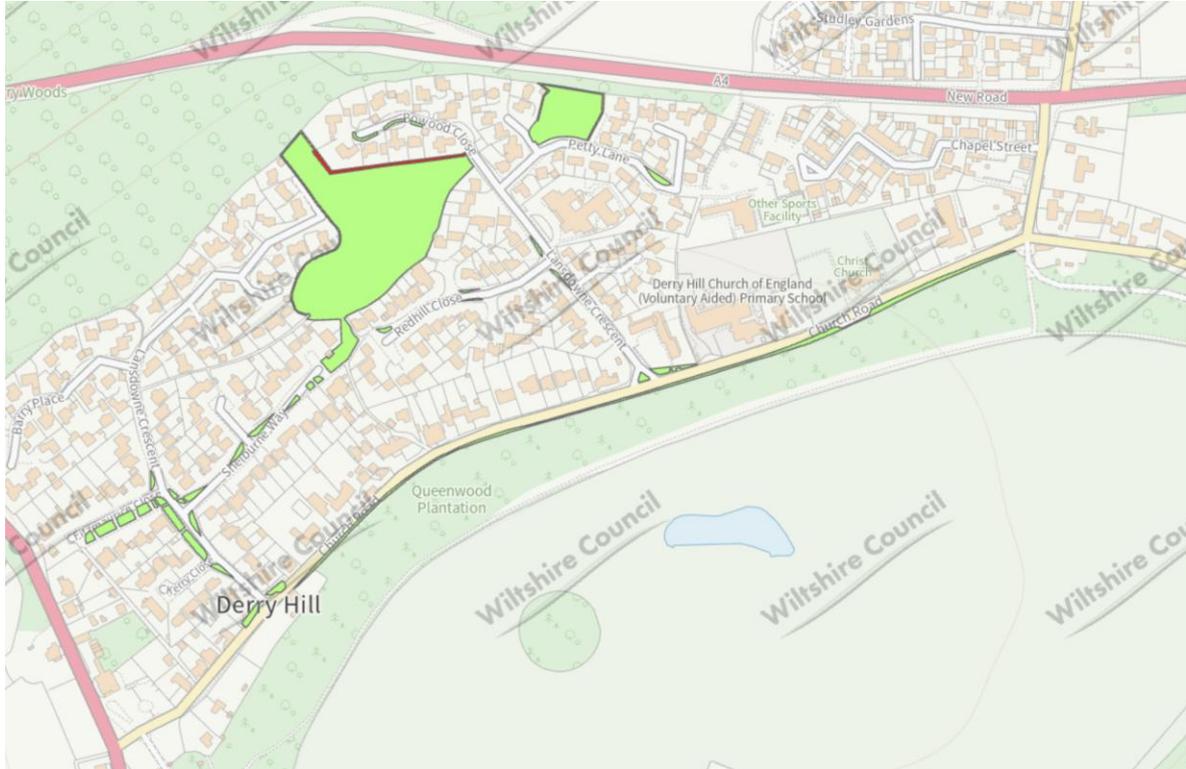
- Roadside management
- Probably tidy ups on 3 May as above. Although we may need other sessions for more of the heavy work like alongside the A4 and Church Road pavement reveal!

Plus we identify any communication needed with those impacted or involved and any third party permissions.

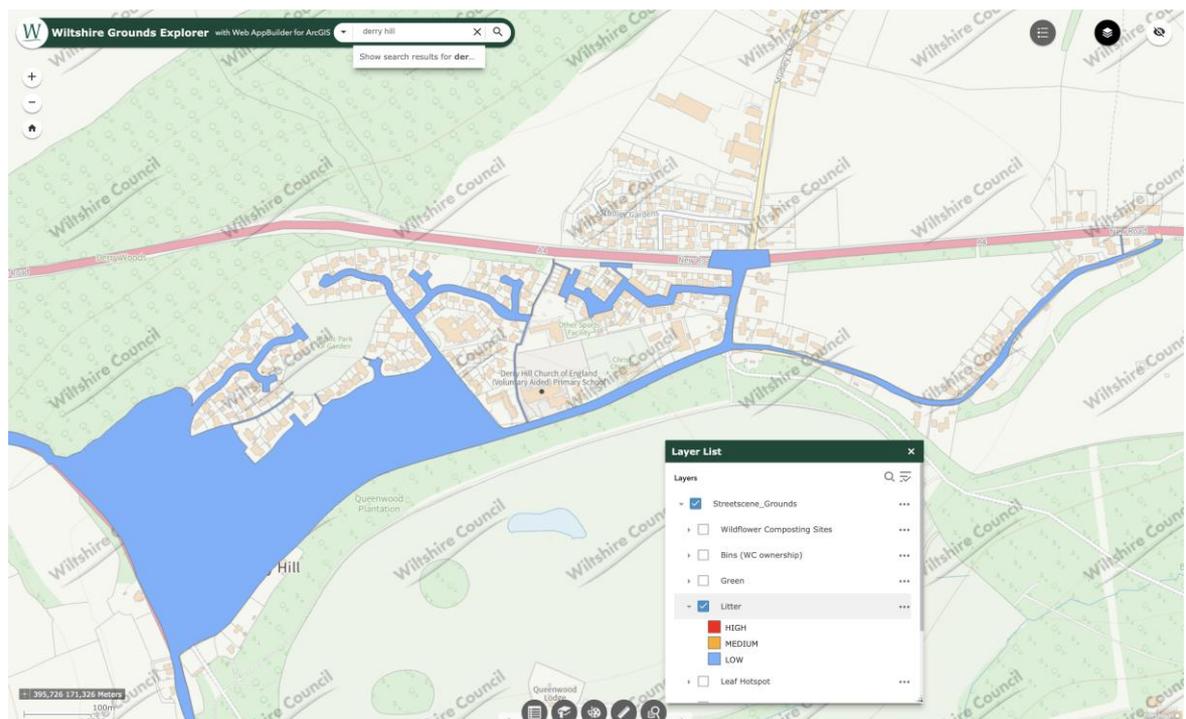
The hazards etc lead us to our risk assessments and insurances etc



Wiltshire Grass Cutting Areas



Wiltshire Litter Picking Area





Cadastral Boundaries at Studley Crossroads

