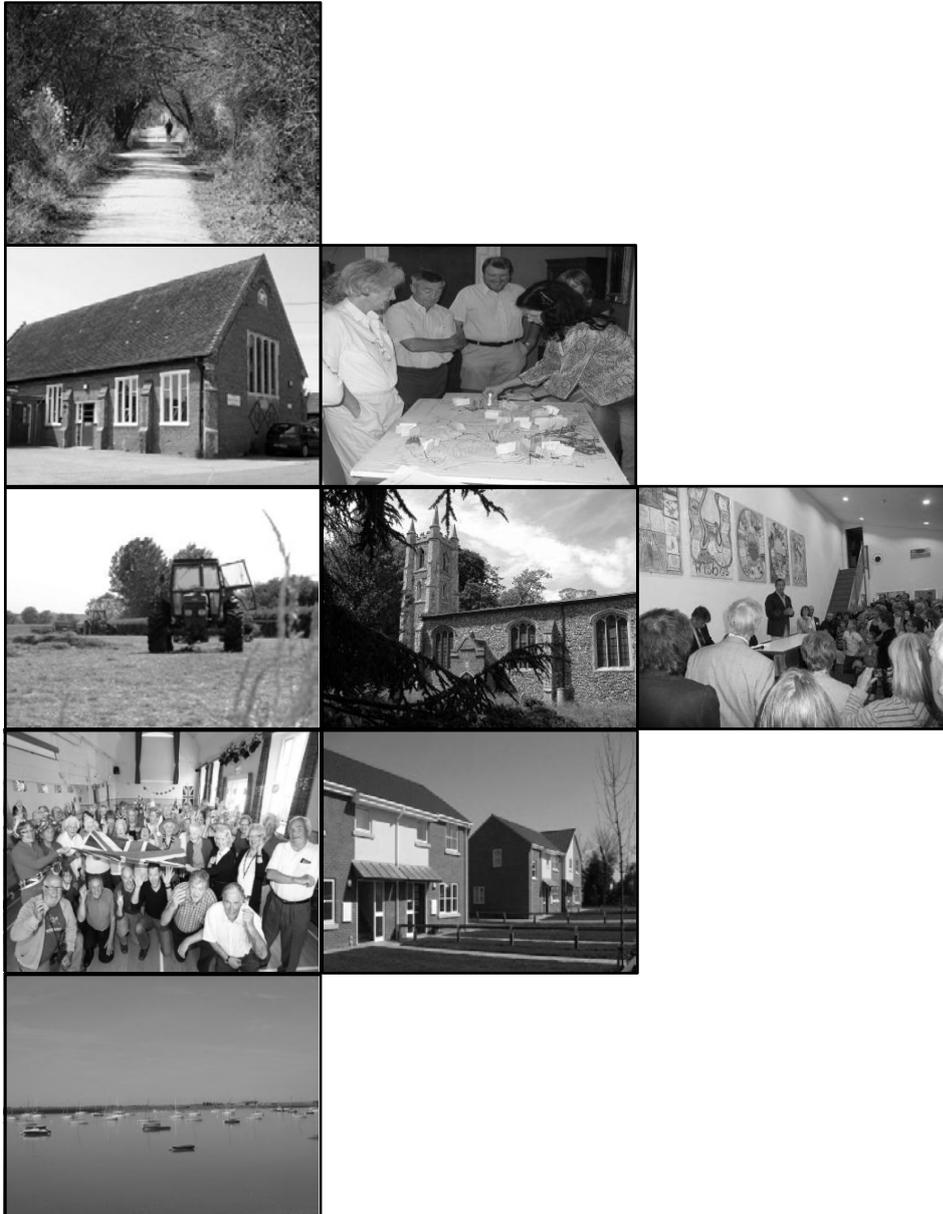


Rural Community Council of Essex

2015 Essex Village of the Year & Best Kept Village Competition

Entry Guidelines 2015



Enter Online at www.essexrcc.org.uk

Rewarding Communities for 60 years

Welcome to the 2015 Essex Village of the Year and Best Kept Village Competition. Sponsored by Essex & Suffolk Water and Worldbridge Ltd, and supported by Essex Life.

This competition is all about encouraging and rewarding vibrant, enterprising and caring rural communities. It is the only competition of its kind in Essex that focuses on the whole community rather than on the work of the Parish Council or one particular organisation or amenity. This year marks the 60th anniversary of our first ever Best Kept Village competition. In keeping with this proud tradition, our judges will be looking for those villages which, irrespective of size, are doing most to enhance the quality of life for all inhabitants.

How to Enter

Each village must have a sponsoring organisation that submits its entry. This will normally be the Parish Council but does not have to be. If the Parish Council is the sponsoring organisation, it is essential to consult with community groups and others involved in the village before submitting the entry. There may be other people in the village prepared to help out or even take the lead.

For judging purposes the competition is divided into two elements.

Village Profile – this comprises five broad questions on the themes of Community, Businesses and Services, Environment, Change and the Future and A Special Place. This gives you the flexibility to describe your community in your own words. Remember, this is your opportunity to “sell” your village, so please make use of question 5.

Larger villages – under questions 1 and 2 please note that we do not require a list of every community organisation or business, just those of particular significance. The size of the community will be taken into account when marking this section.

Remember this is a snapshot profile; please keep to the word limit for each question and note that no supporting documents are required.

Judges’ Inspection – every village will be inspected by our volunteer judges. Judging will be based on 12 individual categories worth 10 marks each. Few villages will actually possess every one of the 12 categories, but smaller communities should not be deterred. Overall marks are calculated on an average formula. The “Hints for Entrants” section on pages 4 and 5 will give you an idea of what the judges will be looking for.

To enter please tick clearly on the Entry Form those categories that are applicable to your village and also mark them clearly using the category numbers on a sketch map/plan of the village. This must be no larger than A4 (297mm x 211 mm) in size.

There is space on the Entry Form for you to highlight any improvements made since last year’s competition as well as to notify the judges of any features detrimental to the local character that are outside of the control of the community.

After the completion of the competition, all entrants can request feedback in the form of a sample judges' inspection form.

Submitting Your Entry

Entries can be made either on line or by post. If submitting your entry on line, all documentation can be accessed by visiting the RCCE website www.essexrcc.org.uk. Entries can be sent to us at enquiries@essexrcc.org.uk

If submitting your entry by post, please send all the required documentation to Sara Ward, Rural Community Council of Essex, Threshelfords Business Park, Inworth Road, Feering, Essex CO5 9SE.

The deadline for all entries is **Friday 10th April 2015**.

For further information please contact Sara Ward on 01376 574330 or email enquiries@essexrcc.org.uk

Additional Information

Prizes

Thanks to the generous support of our sponsors, Essex & Suffolk Water, we are able to offer the following prizes for the Essex Village of the Year:

- 1st Prize: £500 and the Essex & Suffolk Water Shield
- 2nd Prize: £150
- 3rd Prize: £100

There will also be a prize of £150 for each of the 5 Best Kept Village class winners (see below), generously provided by our sponsors, Worldbridge Ltd., as well as merit awards and a special certificate to reward the best performance by a village entering for the first time since 2005.

Best Kept Village (BKV) Classes

To broaden the range of prize winners and to ensure realistic comparisons between competing villages the BKV competition is divided into five separate classes.

Class I	Petre Trophy Population over 5000, less than 10,000
Class II	Whitmore Trophy Population over 2,000 less than 5,000
Class III	Andrew Lewis Trophy Population 800 to 2,000
Class IV	Ruggles-Brise Trophy Population 300 to 800
Class V	Braybrooke Trophy Population under 300

Judges

As in all previous years this year's competition will be judged entirely by volunteers. New judges are always welcome. If you know of anybody willing to help or would like more information on what is involved please visit the RCCE website www.essexrcc.org.uk, email enquiries@essexrcc.org.uk or contact Sara Ward on 01376 574330.

Best Kept Churchyard Competition – *Did you know that RCCE also organise the Best Kept Churchyard Competition? Full details of this competition are enclosed with this mailing. They have also been sent directly to Parochial Church Councils. Visit www.essexrcc.org.uk or call RCCE on 01376 574330 for more information.*

Hints for Entrants - What Makes a Winning Village?

Overview

It is important to stress that in keeping with the aims of RCCE's wider work the judges will look at villages as living communities and not as artificially manicured museum pieces!

The purpose of the competition is to reward evidence of community pride and encourage proper care for the focal points of village life. Try to encourage the wider community to get involved, including children and young people.

Judging Categories

It is important to emphasise that for categories 4, 8, 9, 10 and 11 all judging is based on external rather than internal inspections.

The judges will be briefed to pay attention to the following when assessing each judging category:

1. Notice Boards

Are the boards being used to provide up-to-date information?

Are they satisfactorily maintained?

Are contact names for the parish council, and relevant village organisations publicly displayed?

Is there anything to say that the village has entered the competition? Posters designed by local children have been used in some villages.

2. Playing Field

Maintenance of field (grass cutting), associated buildings and perimeter. Is there effective control of litter and dog fouling?

3. Children's Playground

As above for litter and dog fouling. Is the equipment and surrounds satisfactorily maintained?

4. Village Hall/ Community Centre

The maintenance of the exterior and surrounds. Is there a notice of how to book the hall and who manages it?

5. Churchyard and Cemetery

Parish Council-run cemeteries as well as churchyards are included here. If part of the churchyard is left to grow wild for conservation purposes is there a notice to this effect?

6. War Memorial

Is it tidy with the memorial inscriptions clearly legible?

7. Village Green and Public Open Space

Is it maintained and kept tidy?

8. Shops

Many shops display information on village events and meetings. This is good, but the judges will check that the displays are up-to-date.

9. Public Houses

As above for village events and information. Other problems can include the state of outside furniture and car parks.

10. School

Judges do not go into school premises – their main concern is the upkeep of perimeter fencing/hedges etc.

Please note if part of the school grounds are maintained as a nature feature with long grass etc.

11. Business Premises

Are they tidy – the judges will appreciate they are looking at a working environment.

12. Bus Shelters

Are they tidy and in good repair? Do they have a timetable/information on services?