Record number of volunteers celebrate at Celebration Evening

A record number of volunteers who put pride in their communities and help make Fenland a cleaner, greener place for all to enjoy have been recognised at a special award ceremony.

Dedicated Street Pride, In Bloom, Friends and Getting It Sorted recycling volunteer groups were honoured for their hard work to improve the district’s streets, parks and open spaces at Fenland District Council’s annual Celebration Evening on Thursday, October 3.

A total of 135 volunteers attended the March Braza Club, with seven different awards given for key projects that have been undertaken over the past year. For the first time, groups submitted their projects for consideration under each category.

The ceremony heard that in the last six months there had been over 100 events planned by the groups to improve local areas. Wisbech and Friends of March Railway Station celebrated their tenth anniversary this year and all groups who entered In Bloom achieved Gold.

A new Street Pride group also formed in Wisbech St Mary, taking the total number to 17. They were presented with a £500 start-up grant from Cllr Murphy.

In an opening address, Councillor Peter Murphy, the council’s Portfolio Holder for the Environment, thanked volunteers for their continued dedication and passion to making Fenland a better place to live and work.

“This evening is a time to say a massive thank you for your commitment and dedication as volunteers and for your enthusiasm and hard work, for the benefit of everyone. The work carried out by you all continues to make a huge difference to Fenland. It is a pleasure to be here this evening to hear about all the projects you have been involved with.”

Councillor Murphy presented the awards along with the council’s Street Pride co-ordinator Rebecca Robinett. The winners were:

**Best Nature Project**
- Winners: Wisbech In Bloom for their A-Mazing apple orchard to celebrate the town’s fruit growing heritage
- Highly commended: Whittlesey In Bloom & Friends of Whittlesey Cemetery for their maintenance of the two flower beds at the entrance to the Manor Leisure Centre

**Best Partnership Project**
- Winners: Benwick in Bloom / Street Pride for their beautiful village displays, history information boards and receipt of funding from Metalcraft’s Community Fund.
- Highly commended: Friends of Station Road Cemetery for clearing bramble and large growth from memorials, uncovering headstones that had been hidden from view for a long time.
Best Street Scene Project
- Winners: Elm Street Pride who created two large raised sleeper beds near to the village sign following a successful grant bid.
- Highly commended: Wimblington Street Pride who planted a beautiful display of crocus and tulip bulbs care of Chapel Cottage Plants.

Best Promotional Project
- Winners: Murrow Street Pride who have had a busy first year with regular litter picks. They raised £125 from their coffee morning which they are putting towards a planter project.
- Highly commended: Friends of Ring’s End Nature Reserve who have held a number of events to encourage the community to experience nature on their doorstep.

Best Youth Project
- Winners: Chatteris In Bloom / Street Pride. The Scouts created a planter made from eco-bricks, which are plastic drinks bottles filled with non-recyclable rubbish such as crisp packets and chocolate wrappers.
- Highly commended: Manea Street Pride who installed 10 flower plants around the village following a successful grant bid. Schoolchildren from Manea Primary School helped fill and pot the planters.

Best Clean Up
- Winners: Wisbech St Mary Street Pride, who are the most recent group to join the ranks of volunteers across Fenland. They are already organising monthly litter picks, tackling dog fouling and have begun identifying areas for improvement within the village.
- Highly commended: March Street Pride/In Bloom. In January, the group worked in partnership with volunteers from Greenvale AP to collect 15 bags of waste from various locations in March town centre.

Best Reduce, Reuse, Recycling Project
- Winners: Friends of March Railway Station celebrated their tenth anniversary this year. This year the group replaced their original barrel planters at March station with homemade planters made from recycled donated pallets, painted with recycled paint from CCORRN.
- Highly commended: Orchards C of E Academy School Council who visited Waterbeach Waste Management Park to improve their knowledge of recycling and then delivered a whole school assembly.

The evening also included a hog roast supper and some fantastic live music from a four piece band, ‘The 59ers’.

ENDS

For more information contact Fenland District Council press office on 01354 622226