

Competition Judges - Reporting Sheet

Frithelstock & Frithelstock Stone

The Judges found houses in Frithelstock and Frithelstockstone were very well maintained. In the latter a house on the corner was undergoing renovation, a project that had taken some time, but a task that was evidently undertaken with care and empathy for the old building. Verges were well maintained and residents' gardens were in very good order with great displays of flowers in full bloom. Walls hedges and fences were mostly in good condition. There were several village signs which would appreciate a clean. Judges admired the flower bed at one entrance to the village.

The Village Hall looked in good condition. The notice boards outside the hall are well maintained and communicate the activities in the village. The car park is good here, but could do with some weed control, a minor litter pick from under a bench which itself could do with a coat of paint. Judges noted a heap of gravel in the corner ready for spreading so view this as 'work in progress'. There are also a few areas along the roadside where weeding would enhance the village. The adopted telephone kiosk is evidently maintained by the community, through the Parish Council. It had been painted and worn out panes of glass replaced. There is a new bus shelter commissioned by the Parish Council. This looked very excellent. We viewed the Parish Pump, which looked good and surveyed the area from the immaculately maintained seat; an oasis of tranquillity. Grass on the village green was well cut. Judges perused the village notice board, clean and full to capacity with current village events, the notices tidy and presented. Fewer were on show later in the summer.

Judges admired the superb ornate iron gates at the Village Playing Field. These mirror the gate to the Cemetery at the far eastern point of the village. The Playing Fields were in first class condition; grass cut, hedges tidy, not flailed but neatly trimmed giving both a pleasing appearance and caring for any nesting birds. There had been a working party in May to achieve this. Well done. It looked as good later in the summer. The area was litter free, no doubt that the wooden shrouded bin is doing its job, and hopefully the quaint and individualistic donations box achieves contributions. The younger residents are most fortunate to have such first class playing equipment for recreation, which is very well kept, prior to migrating to the equally well maintained football pitch. Those less inclined to physical exertion can enjoy the scenery from the new bench or make use of the picnic tables suitably placed. The picnic tables are a little weathered and would be enhanced by a coat of paint. The sign in the park needs attention, as it has remnants of brown tape on it which has been mentioned in previous reports.

The footpath beyond the playing field sign was good at the road end but hidden at the next gate, going north. The footpath going south had holly growing over the stile. This needs cutting back. The second gate on this path had dropped badly and was difficult to open. One footpath sign was overgrown. Other than these points the paths were easy to walk and adequately maintained.

Frithelstock comprises the remains of the Augustinian Priory and the neighbouring Church which is approached by way of an avenue of 14 neatly pollarded lime trees; the via Dolorosa. The area around the priory looked beautiful. The church is clean and inviting with an informative guide. We were impressed by the number of people involved in the care of the Church, for example the flower rota comprised 10 people. The graveyard is well tended, with evidence of a post winter clean up. The grass had been cut very well. Later in the summer other judges admired the tidiness of the church yard and the wild flowers to be seen here, although some "junk" had been left by the church porch. The church bells have been re-hung as a result of community effort. A commendable effort! Outside the Church is a small green space with a recently repainted wooden seat and the superbly carved Jubilee Stone, which again was laid as a result of community effort. The War Memorial is clean and cared for as is the notice board on the green.

The Clinton Arms tends the grass in return for using the village green as a beer garden. The pub has many music nights as well as an extensive menu and a good range of real ales. It looked attractive, not manicured and welcoming. There were no obtrusive signs or adverts. A place advertising B&B looked neat and tidy. Farms seen looked appropriately tidy for farms.

It is clear that the community cares for its heritage buildings and remains. There is recycling at the Village Hall, There were a few areas of public planting. The facilities for young children are good. There are adequate dog bins provided, although not always used. There was some fouling found on the footpaths.

The village maps were very good; showing all features. The web site was excellent; easy to navigate and up-to-date. The BKV poster was in all notice boards. The village magazine had information about current events.

There is much evidence of community spirit and involvement in Frithelstock and Frithelstockstone. The village has many clubs; Skittles Team, Pilates, First Friday social nights, Monday evening Circuit Training, Annual Quiz night, Christmas Party and Coffee Mornings held by a very active WI. There are many events over the year. The charity "Scrumpy Stroll" organised by the Entertainments Committee took place on the May Bank Holiday. This was clearly a big event and well advertised. There seem to be many fund-raising initiatives. The Playing Field Team raised over one thousand pounds. The Parish Council supported the Monkleigh Primary School by making a donation towards a yurt. The Indoor Rowers raised over £2,500 for the Devon Air Ambulance. The Village Hall 50 Club raised over £1,800, half of which was given back in prizes and also funded new chairs and tables for the Village Hall.

The village does not seem to rely on a small group doing all the work, but counts on all sections of the community working together. Several villagers recounted how the village had been lucky to also have new residents who are willing to take an active part in village life. The villages were presented to a very high standard, with high attention to detail and we are pleased that Frithelstock achieved Runner Up in yet another very tight final round of the Best Kept Village Competition.