

Rochdale Town Centre

INBLOOM



In partnership with



ROCHDALE
BOROUGH COUNCIL

proud supporters of Britain In Bloom



UK FINALIST
2026

Introduction

We're extremely proud of how we all work together to achieve great things, and at the heart of it all is a strong mix of friendship and wanting to make Rochdale the place to live, work and play.

Key:

Throughout this portfolio, we have highlighted where each part of our entry fits within the three judging pillars – **Horticulture, Environment, and Community**. We hope you find this a helpful reminder of your time with us in Rochdale.



Horticulture



Environment



Community

Contents

Awards 4

Number 1 Riverside 6

Riverside regeneration 8

Baillie Street 10

Revealing the Roch 12

Broadfield Slopes 14

Memorial Gardens 16

The Town Hall 18

Town of Culture 20

Art in the Landscape 21

Events 22

Inspiring the next generation 23

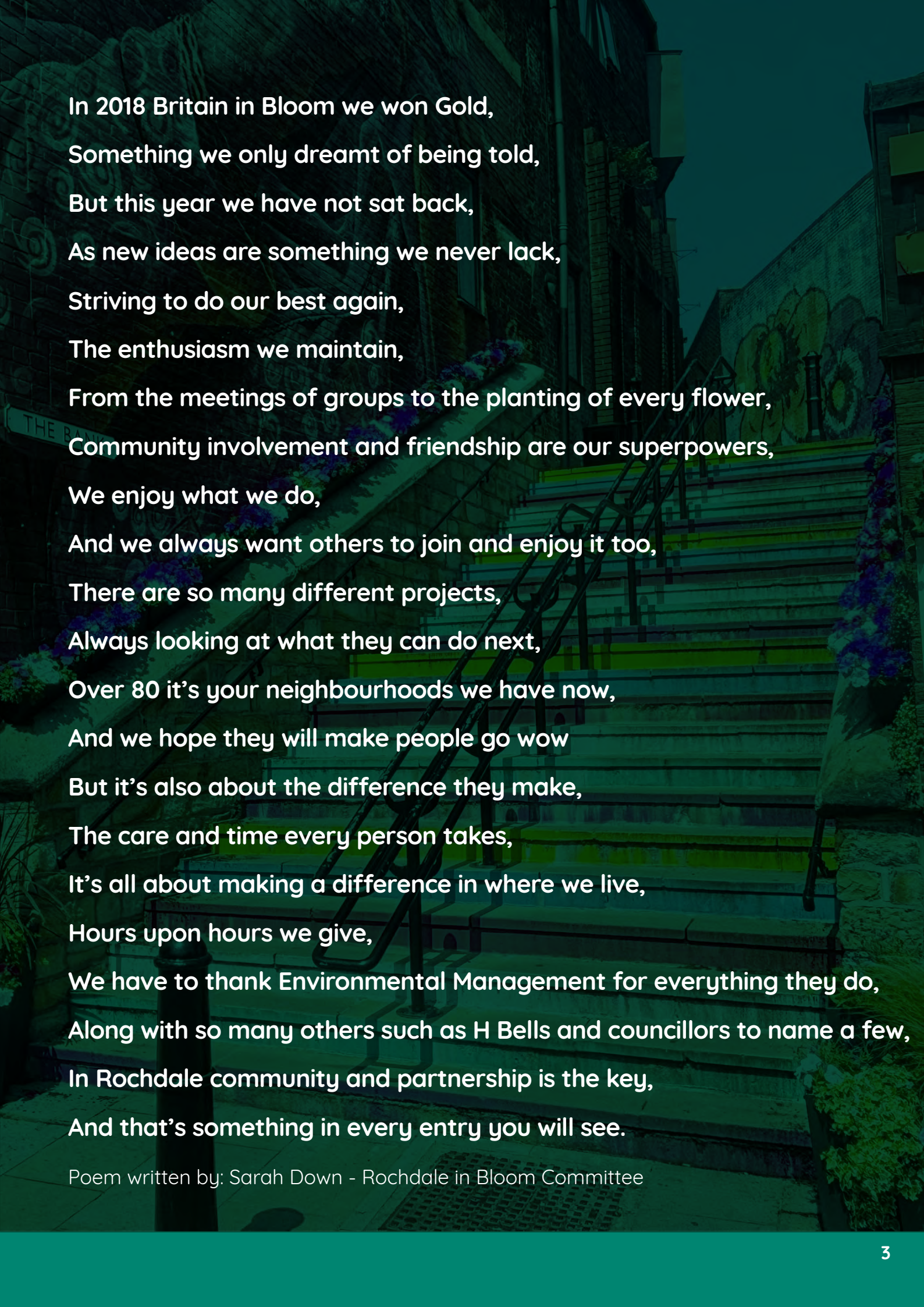
Touchstones 24

Birthplace of Cooperation 26

Recycling 28

Support & Funding 30

Our partners & sponsors 31



In 2018 Britain in Bloom we won Gold,
Something we only dreamt of being told,
But this year we have not sat back,
As new ideas are something we never lack,
Striving to do our best again,
The enthusiasm we maintain,
From the meetings of groups to the planting of every flower,
Community involvement and friendship are our superpowers,
We enjoy what we do,
And we always want others to join and enjoy it too,
There are so many different projects,
Always looking at what they can do next,
Over 80 it's your neighbourhoods we have now,
And we hope they will make people go wow
But it's also about the difference they make,
The care and time every person takes,
It's all about making a difference in where we live,
Hours upon hours we give,
We have to thank Environmental Management for everything they do,
Along with so many others such as H Bells and councillors to name a few,
In Rochdale community and partnership is the key,
And that's something in every entry you will see.

Poem written by: Sarah Down - Rochdale in Bloom Committee

Awards

Achieved our first North West in Bloom Gold Medal Awards.



Gold Medals for all our townships at North West in Bloom and Rochdale scoops Best Town Centre in the North West award.



As well as Gold Medals for all our townships at North West in Bloom, we were proud that for the first time in 2023, all townships also had a gold award winning park.



Gold Medals for all our townships at North West in Bloom and Rochdale scoops a Clean Sweep award for the town's cleanliness. For the first time this year, we also awarded our own award - the Jolly Josh Inclusive Greenspace Award to Alder Hey's Yew Tree garden in collaboration with local charity Jolly Josh.

2016

2018

2021

2022

2023

2024

2025



First year we were chosen to represent the North West at the National in Bloom competition. Rochdale scooped the Gold Medal Award at the first attempt.



Gold medals for all our townships at North West in Bloom Awards. Rochdale entered the National Britain in Bloom awards, receiving gold in the Best Small City Category. RHS judges voted Rochdale as the best small city in the UK, beating Bath and Canterbury.



Gold Medals for all our Townships at North West In Bloom. We were delighted that Rochdale was entered into the National Britain In Bloom competition again to represent the North West, receiving a Gold award in the Town Centre and City Centre category.





“Rochdale in Bloom along with the council has continued with its outstanding work in engaging all areas and representatives of their community with Bloom initiatives.”

“You are all flying the flag for the North West - brilliant work.”

Britain in Bloom

Number One Riverside



Opened in March 2013, Number One Riverside was the catalyst for Rochdale's regeneration journey.

Bringing together approximately 1,800 employees previously scattered across 33 separate buildings, it offers a highly efficient, modern working environment. The publicly accessible ground floor serves as a vibrant community hub, housing the central library, customer service centre, and a café.

Pioneering Carbon Reduction

Environmental efficiency was embedded into the building's footprint from day one. By optimising the structural slabs, 40% of the concrete was saved, delivering a carbon saving of roughly 400 tonnes.



The architecture relies on an innovative "mixed-mode" system that utilises the building's exposed concrete slab for natural cooling. Water is pumped through pipework built into the precast concrete panels, cooling the structural frame and providing free cooling of the workspace. Combined with efficient heating and power infrastructure, the building emits 57% less CO₂ than standard building regulations require.

Evolving for the Future

Fast forward over a decade, and Number One Riverside continues to pioneer sustainable technology. The building's heating and hot water are now supplied by advanced heat pumps powered directly by our local solar farm.



A thriving, staff-managed green roof terrace enhances urban ecology, serves as a community space to grow plants, and helps attenuate rainwater runoff. Complemented by a rainwater harvesting system that recycles water for all non-potable needs. To further elevate local biodiversity, a series of active beehives are being installed on the upper roof later this year.



Sustainable Transport Connections

Rochdale town centre prioritises accessible, low-carbon travel. Number One Riverside is seamlessly connected to regional bus and tram networks, with stops located right on our doorstep. With electric vehicle charging points nearby at the Rochdale Exchange and a fully pedestrianised public square, the town centre remains a safe, accessible environment whether visitors choose to walk, wheel, or ride.



Wildflower meadow at the back of Number One Riverside, which provides a really useful food source and habitat for a wide range of invertebrates using the Roch corridor.

Riverside regeneration



The award-winning retail development Rochdale Riverside has been thriving since it opened in April 2020.

Rochdale Riverside was a vital part of the £400m regeneration of Rochdale town centre and is a fantastic facility for residents and visitors, bringing major high street retailers and a strong leisure offer, which complements the many wonderful businesses we already have in Rochdale, which includes several independents.

The project was delivered on the council's behalf by Rochdale Development Agency in collaboration with private sector partners Genr8 and Kajima.



The kinetic wall depicts the River Roch running through our town centre. The exhibit shimmers as the wind blows through the tiles. This is a strong representation of our use of art to connect residents and visitors to our local identity.

Rochdale Riverside helps the town centre bloom



Earth Day

Rochdale Riverside marked Earth Day with a community-focused event designed to educate and engage local residents in environmental action, including a bottle exchange where visitors were invited to trade in single-use plastic water bottles in return for a free reusable alternative courtesy of the shopping centre.

Retailers also got behind the initiative, such as Coffee House, which offered discounted drinks to customers who brought their own reusable cups, encouraging more sustainable habits and reinforcing the day's message.

Rochdale Riverside is proud to work alongside Rochdale in Bloom to support a range of projects designed to enhance Rochdale town centre and celebrate community, creativity and wellbeing.

Community planting

Sponsorship has funded four flower beds located in the heart of Rochdale town centre, adjacent to the War Memorial. Two beds were designed by the Young Horticulturalist of the Year finalists, celebrating creativity and sustainable urban planting. Two beds contain sensory planting in support of local charity, Jolly Josh, creating an inclusive space for all to enjoy.

Rochdale was proud to host the 2026 Chartered Institute of Horticulture Young Horticulturalist of the Year Final at Rochdale Town Hall.

'Style in Bloom'

The partnership will continue throughout the summer with a dedicated Bloom-themed campaign at Rochdale Riverside, featuring interactive activities, competitions and family-friendly experiences during the school holidays.



**Rochdale
Riverside**

Baillie Street



Over the last few years, the Rochdale Business Improvement District (BID) has continued to improve the much loved Baillie Street Quarter.

A historic street with several Grade-II listed buildings, Baillie Street is home to a variety of independent shops, bars, and restaurants, plus several ginnels including Bull Brow, The Butts Avenue, and The Bank Steps. This key route between Rochdale Riverside, Yorkshire Street, and the Exchange Shopping Centre, has been successfully rebranded by the BID as the Baillie Street Quarter due to its unique sense of place.



To help define the identity of this area a series of interventions have been carried out which include installing planters; painting doorways; removing disused signs; and installing branded signage. Perhaps one of the most dramatic changes has been the introduction of over 150 hanging baskets and troughs. These bloom all year round thanks to BID Rangers, and local school volunteers.



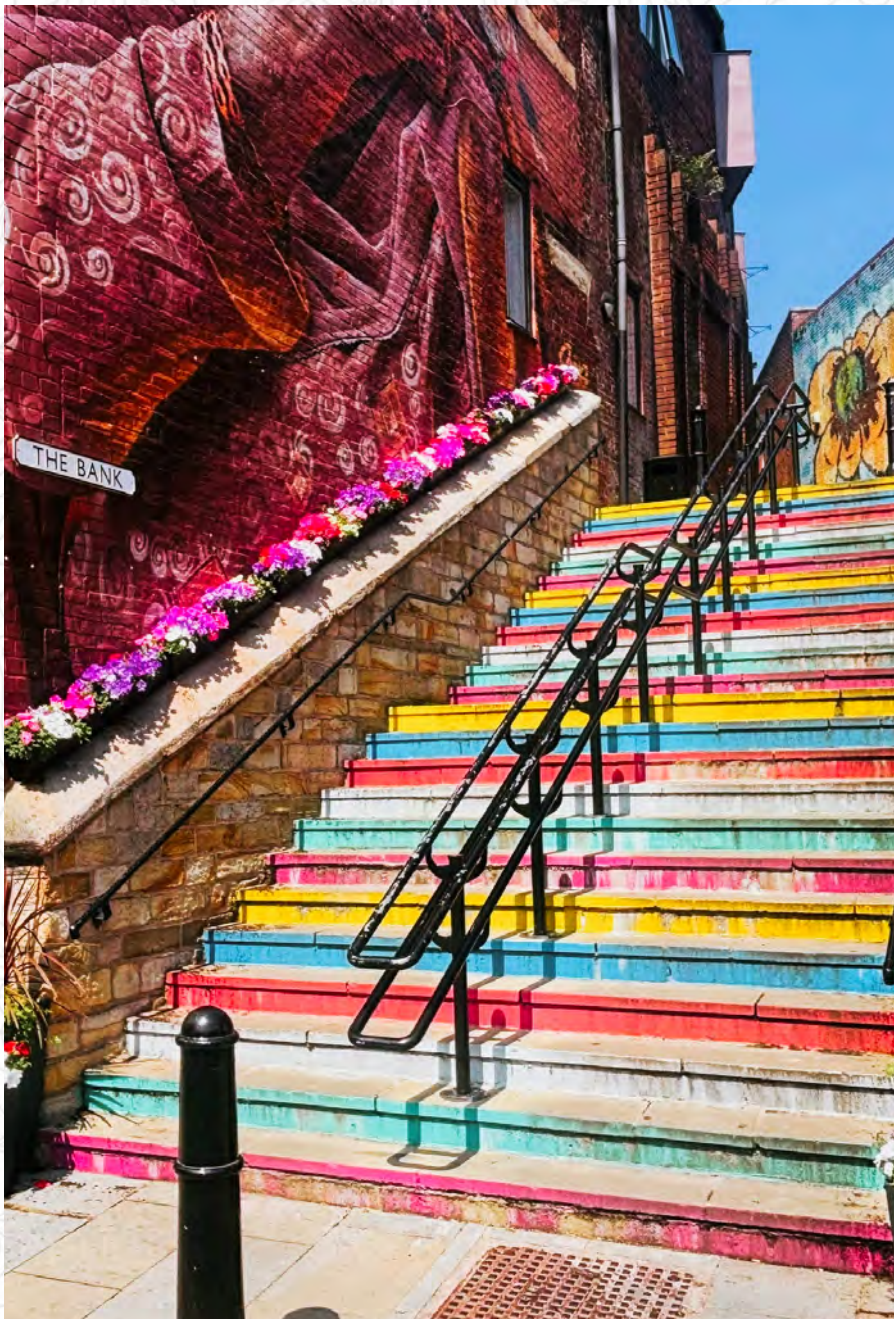
Broadfield Community Primary School supports the BID by growing summer flowers in pop-up greenhouses. These flowers are then replanted into our hanging baskets. The project has allowed children to learn about biodiversity and horticulture while directly contributing to the appearance of the town centre.



Hidden Heritage Stories panels

The latest improvement to Rochdale town centre's Baillie Street Quarter has been the installation of the 'Hidden Heritage Stories'. Each panel tells its own story, providing a glimpse into the past for Rochdale's growing number of visitors, while also showing those who live in the town how much they've got to be proud of. The panels which have proven to be very popular and they are helping to connect visitors to our past.





Perhaps one of the most dramatic changes has been the introduction of over 150 hanging baskets and troughs. These bloom all year round thanks to Rochdale BID volunteer efforts and help to brighten the visitor experience.



Baillie Street, before



Baillie Street, after

Revealing the Roch



The reopening and revealing of the River Roch in 2016 was central to the restoration of Rochdale town centre. The work revealed a stunning medieval bridge and created a charming backdrop for locals and visitors.

As well as offering visitors a glimpse of Rochdale's rich past, the project helps reduce flood risk in the town centre. Opening the river has also helped re-naturalise it and attract new wildlife to the area. The rock formations on the riverbed were placed deliberately to create and support thriving habitats for wildlife.

Brown trout, kingfishers, grey wagtails, pied wagtails have all been spotted. Herons are often spotted stalking the river near the bus station and along the newly opened stretch. The vegetated gravel side bars support plants such as marsh marigold, cow parsley and purple loosestrife.



Rochdale's stunning River Roch regeneration project also took top spot in two categories at the North West Construction Awards.

Support for the project

The £5 million council scheme was supported by:



The Heritage Award recognises the achievement of high standards in the repair, re-use and revitalisation of the region's historic buildings, sites and places. Judges were looking for evidence of research and investigation into traditional methods and materials encountered and a commitment to the development of heritage skills and training opportunities.

The Manchester sub-regional project of the year recognises excellence and best practice.

The council's entry highlighted the importance of the bridge in the development of Rochdale, as it was used to transport wool from Yorkshire to be finished in Rochdale's many weaving mills. This generated a huge amount of wealth for the town, which in turn paid for many of the fine historic buildings that now surround the re-opened river.

Judges were also impressed with the 8,000 volunteers who got involved with the project and were given the opportunity to learn new skills including artefact curation, stone masonry, and how to use lime mortar.

The project was awarded Excellence in Planning at the national RPTI awards and outstanding project management at the Considerate Constructor scheme awards, as well as the Green Apple award for environmental good practice.

A full time-lapse video can be found at:
rochdale.gov.uk/improving-borough/revealing-roch

Peregrine falcons in Rochdale



Peregrine falcons have been nesting outside the clock tower at Rochdale Town Hall since 2008.

The birds have attracted considerable public interest and they're regularly seen soaring above Rochdale town centre hunting for food.

We built a nesting area for the birds in 2008 to help provide them with a safe haven to sleep, breed and raise their young. As the tallest building in Rochdale town centre, the town hall reflects the peregrine's natural habitat to breed and hunt prey.

You can watch the falcons on a live webcam. Schools use the footage along with a raptor professional group to study these special residents.

rochdale.gov.uk/falcons



Broadfield Slopes



Broadfield Slopes behind the town hall is now transformed thanks to a National Lottery Heritage Fund (NLHF) grant. The Broadfield Park Slopes project has turned an unused space into a vibrant and safe public outdoor area that reveals and shares the histories of the origins of the town of Rochdale with a wider range of people, adding additional gravitas to the recently renovated Rochdale Town Hall to attract visitors from all over the county and beyond.

All the planning work for the slopes has been developed through public consultation working in partnership with Rochdale in Bloom to create a cooperative vision for Rochdale.



Funding will allow:

- Archaeological investigations that explore the trades and roles of local people
- A school's learning programme which is engaging up to 400 children, staff and parents in the natural and cultural heritage of the slopes
- A 'DEC Award' project supporting learning and skills development related to the world of work. 15 Archaeological work placements, working alongside professionals
- 1 Community Engagement Apprenticeship opportunity
- 1 Archaeological project management apprentice opportunity
- A young archaeologists club established in Rochdale
- £24,300 generated from over 1,215 volunteer hours contributed

- A programme of natural heritage engagement events and activities involving the local community in improving and maintaining biodiversity on the slopes
- £120,861 of non-cash contributions from our partners
- 15 green volunteer sessions to support the ongoing management and maintenance of the historic fabric and habitat
- A public events space created with local art organisations and neighbours to highlight the cultural heritage of the slopes

We have 2 volunteer programmes as part of the Broadfield Park Slopes project.

- Green Volunteer Training Programme: 12 volunteers (with Get Up and Grow facilitating the sessions)
- Archaeology Research Programme with 7 volunteers

The council have also planted 36 native broadleaved trees to improve biodiversity and to make the park more climate resilient. A beautiful wildflower meadow also sits proudly behind the Town Hall, attracting a broad range of pollinating insects.

Large scale community archaeological digs took place on the slopes in 2025, with more than 600 people taking part to uncover the history of Rochdale town centre. Previous excavations of the site have found the foundations of an 18th century corn mill, a weighing station, and glass bottles.

An event through Rochdale BID is planned, supported by the Rochdale Field Naturalist Society to help visitors to understand more about the ecological background to the slopes.



The wildflower turf includes ox eye daisy and red campion



Archaeological digs



1. The restoration of the Broadfield Slopes has been supported by the National Lottery Heritage Fund
2. Beautiful etchings in the ground form a trail allowing visitors to learn more about the slopes and engage with their history
3. Natural pools and historic drainage channels
4. An old photo of the Broadfield Slopes
5. The Ignite Fire Festival heralded the reopening of the slopes in November 2025 and had 12,000 visitors

1



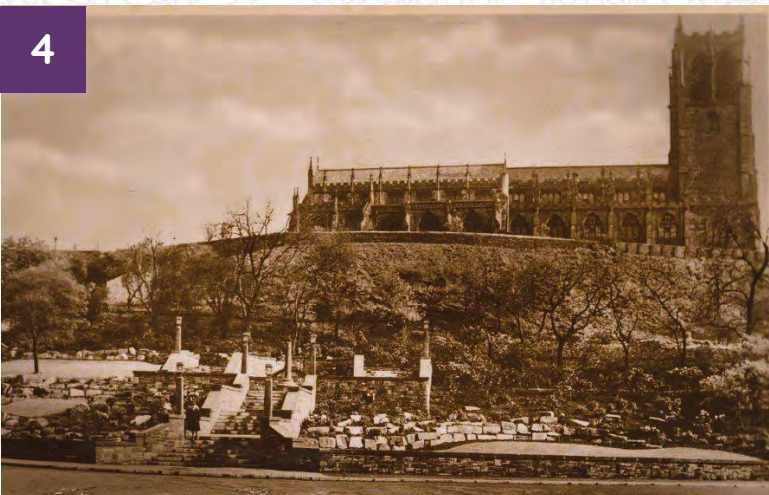
2



3



4



5



Memorial garden



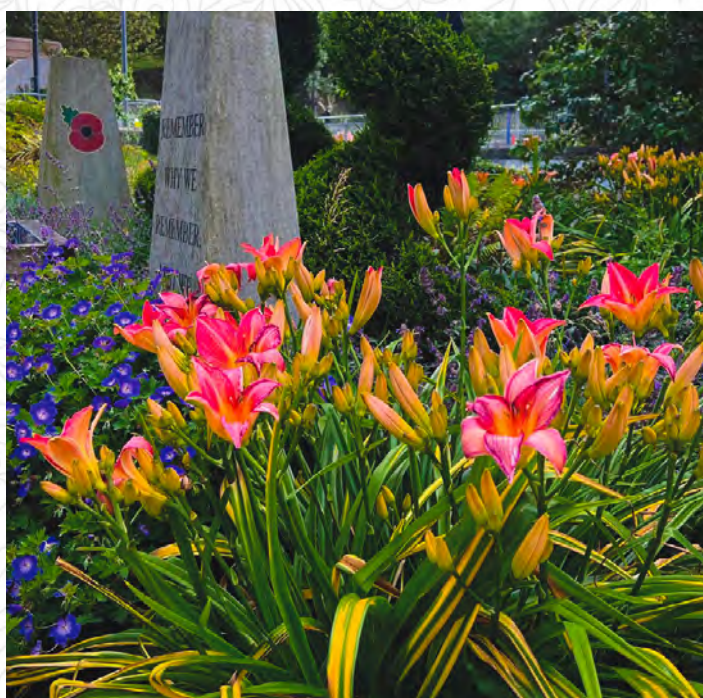
The WW1 memorial garden started life as a show garden in 2017 in the Town Hall square.

Proving popular, it was moved to a permanent location in 2018 in the memorial gardens you see today, thanks to help from Rochdale in Bloom and sponsors

A simplified version of the show garden won a Gold Medal and Best Blooming Border award at the RHS Tatton Flower show.

H. Bell & Sons donated time when the structure was moved to its resting place to re-pave the area, with help from two local schools - Hamer and Springside who planted a time capsule.

The garden features symbolic planting, sandstone columns with commemorative inscriptions and steel soldier silhouettes, creating a striking focal point alongside Rochdale Cenotaph and is now an IYN entry known as Rochdale in Bloom Community Remembrance Garden.





20 tonnes of manure was dug in by staff and community payback before they were replanted to ensure these beautiful roses get what they need. Planted in the colours of the Lancashire Fusiliers (and predecessor) regiment of deep red, rich yellow and white, our favourite rose is Rosa Absolutely Fabulous

The memorial garden flower beds and surrounding site are managed and maintained by the council, with assistance with plants or repairs to the structure, in partnership with Rochdale in Bloom.

H Bell & Sons have supported and maintained the WW1 memorial garden since its creation, ensuring it stays in good condition year-round. This award-winning community garden serves as a meaningful heritage feature appreciated by residents and visitors alike.

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Sponsorship has funded four flower beds in Rochdale town centre, near the War Memorial. Two beds were designed by the finalists of the Chartered Institute of Horticulture's Young Horticulturalist of the Year competition, Ruby Goodwin and Jess Arundell

The Town Hall



Rochdale Town Hall is a grade one listed building designed by William Crossland, which opened in 1871 to symbolise the town's rich industrial standing in the textile trade. Its ornate stylings are rivalled only by the Palace of Westminster according to Historic England.

In 2019 work began to restore the building to its former glory, some 150 years after it was first completed. It is a magnificent reminder of Rochdale's rich history but also a warm, welcoming public space with a breathtaking backdrop for celebrations and events. Outside, Town Hall Square provides a place for the local community to come together.

Funded by the council, phase 1 of the restoration project got underway in January 2021 with major structural works carried out on the building.

With additional support from the National Lottery Heritage Fund of £ 8.3 million, phase 2 began in summer 2021, with work completed in spring 2024.

The ongoing regeneration of the town hall has been made possible with the expert help of specialists from across the North of England and local volunteers. Community involvement has been at the heart of the project and now the doors are open to a magnificent space that's accessible to everyone. Rooms within are available for public and community group use.



Environmental Sustainability – Town Hall

We've taken several steps to make the renovation of the town hall environmentally sustainable, including:

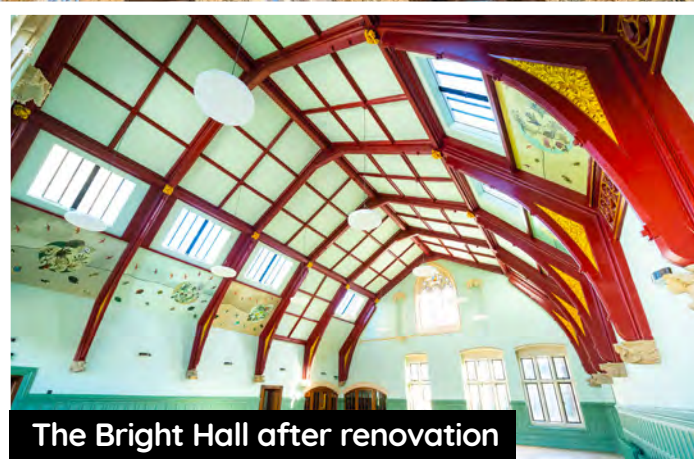
- A whole new heating system has been installed throughout the building, with new pipework concealed in voids after extensive research and opening up to find secret routes.
- Historic radiators were refurbished and reused, and a completely new control system allows heating to be zoned to improve comfort, reduce energy consumption, and provide fabric protection.
- Temperature compensation (allowing the heating temperature to reduce as it gets warmer outside) allows low flow temperatures for higher efficiency...but also for the connection of a heat pump in the next phase. The heat pump will reduce carbon emissions by approximately 90 tonnes per year by working in tandem with the existing boilers. A new substation was provided to supply heat pumps and EV charging bays, with electricity provided via a local solar farm.
- To keep the heat in, the roofs were insulated, including the Great Hall which was provided with foil insulation due to the shallow void. The roof insulation will reduce carbon emissions by approximately 100 tonnes per year.





The Great Hall

- In summer, this will also help to reduce temperature peaks during the hottest days protecting the occupants from high internal temperature for the hotter future due to climate change impacts.
- Where the historic and visual impact was low, external windows were replaced with double-glazed units. More openable windows were provided to improve natural ventilation through the heavily occupied spaces. These allow for better air quality but also a means of providing cooling to accommodate a future warmer climate.
- All lighting in the building is now LED, which all have the same warm colour temperature to suit a building of this age.
- The new lighting outside the town hall is also LED, with a longer-term programme planned to replace the rest of the town centre within 2-3 years.
- The fittings in the newly glazed Port Cochère and Clocktower Entrance were sourced from an architectural salvage organisation and restored.
- The lighting system now has more control. A switch at the door allows all fittings to be switched off by the last person out, so no lights are left on.



The Bright Hall after renovation

The building is future-proofed for the changing climate, and for electrification to move fully away from gas to minimise its impact on the environment.



We were proud to host GREENFLEET LIVE! at the Town Hall in October 2025. The event helps UK fleet and transport professionals drive toward net zero, with expert insight, practical solutions, and powerful networking. The Town Hall offered the perfect venue given it's outstanding green credentials and also boasts 38 active volunteers.

Town of Culture

A year of creativity, connection and pride

Rochdale's year as Greater Manchester Town of Culture 2025/26 celebrated the borough's heritage, creativity and communities, demonstrating how culture can transform places and bring people together.

Throughout the year, Rochdale town centre became a vibrant stage for performances, exhibitions, festivals and community celebrations, with the restored Town Hall and new Town Hall Square at the heart of activity.



The programme reflected the three pillars of Britain in Bloom, horticulture, environment and community, by creating welcoming spaces, inviting discussion on environment and nature, encouraging people to explore the town centre and inspiring pride in Rochdale's heritage and cultural identity.



From large scale festivals and public art projects to community led events created with local people, it showcased the diversity of Rochdale's communities and celebrated the creativity that exists across the borough.



Highlights included the **Flight of Fancy Parade**, which involved 220 local residents and school children who designed lanterns inspired by environment, nature and wildlife. The **Ignite Fire Festival**, attracting more than 12,000 visitors, to mark the opening of the newly refurbished Broadfield Slopes, the **Co-op Fair** and **Medieval Fayre**, welcoming over 4,500 visitors, and the **Common Walls International Mural Festival**, which brought more than 18,000 people into the town centre.



The year was a resounding success and has delivered a lasting legacy:



Rochdale's Town of Culture year demonstrated that thriving towns are built through people, creativity and shared experiences. Creating places where communities can connect, grow and flourish.

Following the success Rochdale has gone onto bid to become the 2028 UK Town of Culture.



Art in the Landscape

In 2025, some of the world's best street artists visited Rochdale Town Centre for the Common Walls International Mural Festival. Our town centre landscape was transformed with a gallery of 24 murals, inviting visitors and residents to explore these expressions of Rochdale's unique heritage, culture and history. Culminating in an immersive night-time light and audio experience which wowed visitors seeing the Town Centre as it's never been seen before.



Aylo's artwork, featured on the side of Wetherspoons measures 10 metres high and 32 metres long.



One of local artist, Hayley Garner (aka Aylo) designs, was inspired by the thoughts and aspirations of over 100 children from a Rochdale Primary School. They were asked what comes to mind when they think about Rochdale and came up with wonderful ideas.

Hayley said:

"I had the best time working on this. It was fascinating to hear how Rochdale looks from the eyes of children. They came up with the striking design, which shows a young person studying a book about Rochdale. On one side it looks back to the town's heritage and on the other towards the present and future. There was a lot to include, but I think we managed it! The falcons, the town hall, the tram, nature, and the birthplace of the co-op is all in there, along with some hidden meanings."



Events - Rochdale Town Centre



Our new Town Hall Square, one of the largest in the UK, allows Rochdale to host to many outstanding events throughout the year, including Street Eat and the extremely well supported Feel Good Festival.

Street Eat, is a popular food festival that takes place around May/June time annually in Rochdale town centre, organised by Rochdale Business Improvement District (BID). The event brings together the town's food and drink establishments, plus family entertainment with visitors having their taste buds tickled and thirsts quenched, plus free live music. The event is extremely popular with residents and visitors from further afield, bringing in new customers to Rochdale's fantastic eateries.



BID manager Paul Ambrose said:

“It was heart-warming to see so many families and friends enjoying time together. Street Eat is about supporting those local businesses and creating a hub where people can come together to enjoy great food, music and company.”



Street Eat 2026



Feel Good Festival 2025

The Rochdale Feel Good Festival returns on Saturday, 8 August 2026 with a summer line-up of big-name artists, live music stages in indoor venues and a food and drink village.

The festival is organised by Rochdale Development Agency, supported by the council together with sponsorship from local businesses, including Premier Kia, Hopwood Hall College, The Royal Toby, Transport for Greater Manchester and Indurent.

The main stage on Rochdale Town Hall Square will be headlined by Gabrielle, Ash and Starsailor, alongside The Allergies, Alex Spencer, K-ESTATE, Metro, DJ Dave Sweetmore and many more.

Sustainable practices continue, with tickets including a re-usable drink cup to reduce single-use plastics.



Atom Valley

Growing pride in our place

Beyond the town centre, Atom Valley is feeding Rochdale's future ambition by providing 17 million

sq ft of employment space, 20,000 new jobs, and 7,000 new homes. Supporting the plan is the Atom Valley Education Challenge Consortium (AVECC), a groundbreaking partnership with The Ogden Trust and The Cavendish Laboratory, University of Cambridge. Local pupils gather monthly at Rochdale Town Hall for advanced science projects.

Inspired by Rochdale in Bloom, the Year 5 cohort chose an environmental study. Their hands-on investigative research includes:

- **Soil Health Surveys:** Measuring moisture, organic matter, and earthworms
- **Pollinator Investigations:** Identifying plant varieties attracting bees and butterflies
- **Biodiversity Audits Air Pollution Sampling:** Analysing local lichen and habitats



These budding scientists will soon present their findings at a special exhibition in Rochdale Town Hall.

Listening to Young Voices



Rochdale is committed to putting young people at the heart of environmental change. Recently, the Town Centre welcomed Lilly, an 8.5 meter tall puppet who inspired hundreds of school children to share their environmental hopes through poetry, art, and song. These were showcased at the Wild Wanders event at Hollingworth Lake, where over 4,000 visitors listened to the children's powerful messages.

"Dear adults, even though we are little you should listen to us because we have big ideas. Even though we are small we still have mighty in us. Please listen to our voices. I love where I live because of all the fields, trees, lakes and hills that are on my doorstep. I love where I live because of all the greenery around the town. I love Rochdale because of all its green spaces..."



To turn words into action, the Rochdale Children's Council annually tables motions to Full Council, and locally elected Children's

Champions (aged 8-16) meet directly with Environmental Management directors to co-design projects, including new bug hotels, vegetable gardens, enhanced park signage and inclusive play.



Touchstones



“This is a fabulous project. The children across both classes really enjoyed the visit and were fascinated.”

Teacher, Broadfield Community Primary

Touchstones Rochdale is the borough's Arts and Heritage Centre which has been working alongside the council's parks and countryside rangers to deliver the Explore Urban Nature Project at Broadfield Park in the centre of Rochdale for the last 3 years, engaging with 11 schools/ groups.

Explore Urban Nature is a national, three-year project, supported by the National Lottery Heritage Fund and delivered in partnership with the Natural History Museum.

Working together with partner schools to increase awareness of urban wildlife and habitats, to protect and increase local biodiversity. We do this by delivering both indoor and outdoor workshops, and sharing events, and activities linked to the British Science Association's CREST awards. Recent projects in the park have included undertaking Opal water quality surveys and Opal air quality tree detective sessions.



“Thanks again for such a wonderful experience! It helped some of the children who have complex needs/ sensory issues access the science curriculum more than they would in a ‘typical’ science lesson.”

Teacher, Belfield

“I’ve been telling everyone and anyone who will listen about how fantastic the pond dipping was! As well as the archives!”

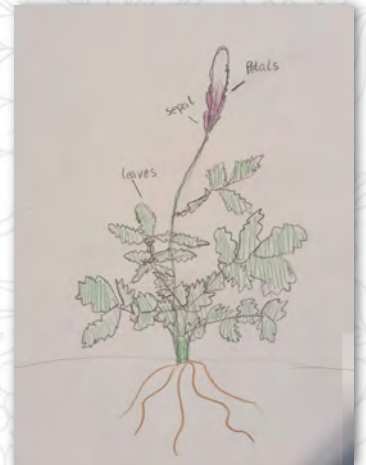
Teacher, Falinge Park High

“I’m so proud of my drawing! It’s the only one I’ve done that I want to frame!”

Student, home educators group

This year, Touchstones Museum and Gallery in has received funding from the Natural History Museum for a two-year ‘Museums of Nature’ project, which will empower local communities to help shape natural heritage sites. Building on our current work with the RDA at Broadfield Slopes, where workshops help children and young people explore local wildlife, we’d like to make the slopes the focus of this project.

We plan to work with secondary school pupils to map existing habitats and wildlife, then support them to decide what changes could improve the area. Possible ideas include bug hotels, bird houses, new planting and pond improvements.



Birthplace of Co-Operation



A Co-op branded Morris Minor van can be found on St Mary's Gate Rochdale, which is the birthplace of the modern co-operative movement.

The van has been used as part of a flowerbed on St Mary's Gate to make the borough more attractive by planting more plants and flowers.

The van is also very close to the Toad Lane Museum, where the Rochdale Equitable Pioneers Society members opened their store selling pure food at fair prices and honest weights and measures in 1844.

Since then the society has been through many mergers and name changes – it is now part of the UK's largest consumer co-op, the Co-operative Group. The car chosen is similar to the ones that used to do deliveries in towns like Rochdale in the 1960s and 70s. After acquiring it from eBay, the council asked a local body repair shop to carry out the restoration work needed and worked with the Co-op to ensure they got the right branding and design. In keeping with the co-operative theme, you can find a lovely cart filled with flowers in the town centre, with a nod to confectionery branch number five.



Our cooperative heritage is represented by planting in the coop van and also in a traditional cooperative society handcart on display in the Town Centre as shown.



Image: Toad Lane Museum

In Bloom is a great example of co-operative working with residents, volunteers and local businesses.

Bowlee Garden Nursery



The council's nursery grows all of the plants and flowers you can see in our bedding displays and hanging baskets, growing an average 250,000 plants on site each year, which saves tonnes of carbon typically used to ship in plants. The plant pots used are all recyclable and the compost used is all peat-free. The nursery also minimises the use of chemicals by using things like parasitic wasps to prevent pests and diseases.

In other areas:

- In 2024, 500 new trees took root across the borough of Rochdale as part of the council's commitment to increase urban tree cover. The work is possible thanks to the donation of 472 trees from City of Trees, Greater Manchester's community forest.
- In 2025, we have planted 3,162 trees and 2,132 in 2026. The standard trees were a mixture of City of Trees projects and our use of the council's Climate Emergency Fund to plant standards in high profile areas where we lost trees to diseases such as ash dieback. The larger numbers represent projects to create woodland and hedgerows with Trees for Nature funding.



Annual bedding costs fell by 12% between 2024/25 and 2025/26, with a further reduction of around 33% expected this year. While annual bedding will still feature in some formal parks and public spaces, we're increasingly adopting more sustainable planting schemes, including wildflowers and sedum, to boost biodiversity, cut waste and reduce costs. This also includes replacing some annual displays with perennial planting and increasing the use of perennials within existing bedding schemes.

Examples of this approach include reduced barrier liner displays on Manchester Road in Rochdale, replaced with sedum verges and permanent planting, and on-street planters using more perennial planting.



The new planting plays an important role in sustainable drainage, helping Rochdale adapt to changing weather patterns.

Recycling



The council's recycling team is keen to educate the next generation by delivering many fun and engaging lessons to year 5 classes in primary schools across the borough, alongside competitions to create artwork for bin wagons and attending year-round events to promote reduce, reuse, and recycle messages to residents.

In 25/26, we delivered lessons to 87 x Year 5 classes (50 schools) =2,610 pupils

We also support local initiatives. Last year, at Rochdale's Crucial Crew event at Rochdale AFC, we delivered environmental workshops to more than 1,890 Year 6 pupils from 42 schools over three weeks. The sessions focused on littering, good citizenship and the council's work to protect the local environment.

Regular litter picks are also held with local schools, colleges and community groups,

helping to keep the borough clean and encouraging pride in the places where people live, work and socialise.

We have worked with a local college to create a recycling fish, which collects items such as plastic bottles and is regularly used at events across the borough. A recent primary school bin wagon artwork project attracted hundreds of entries, with four winning designs selected.



Eliza from Littleborough Community Primary School



Habib's artwork from St Patrick's RC Primary School



Lily from Littleborough Community Primary School



Oscar's artwork from St Mary's CE Primary School

Media

We love sharing news about our successes, but also about how hard voluntary groups work across the borough.

We all work together to make a difference and by working in partnership and forging solid friendships, we unite to make our borough blooming marvelous.



Community spirit blossoms during flower bed project

Rochdale's community spirit is in full bloom as volunteers came together to improve and enhance the town centre, supported by a new partnership between Rochdale in Bloom and Rochdale Riverside.

The partnership has launched with the funding of four prominent flower beds located in the heart of Rochdale town centre, facing Rochdale Town Hall and adjacent to the War Memorial and surrounding gardens.

Two of the beds form a striking Legacy Garden, designed by the winners of the Chartered Institute of Horticulture's Young Horticulturalist 'Garden Designer of the Year' competition, Rugby Goodwin and less Arundell, following this year's national final hosted in Rochdale.

The award-winning design showcases sustainable urban planting and highlights horticultural excellence within a civic setting. A further two beds have been created in support of local charity Jolly Josh, incorporating sensory planting elements to create an inclusive and engaging space for visitors of all ages and abilities.

The project continues Rochdale Riverside's support for Jolly Josh, which has proudly been the shopping centre's Charity of the Year for the past two years.

Colleagues from Rochdale Riverside also rolled up their sleeves to help plant the flower beds, working alongside Rochdale in Bloom volunteers to bring the colourful displays to life.

The partnership will continue throughout the summer with a special campaign at Rochdale Riverside, featuring interactive activities, competitions, and family-friendly experiences during the holidays.

The campaign will coincide with Rochdale in Bloom's regional and national judging period, helping to

showcase the town centre at its very best.

Rachel Byrne, Rochdale Riverside Centre Manager, said: "Rochdale Riverside is proud to support a new two-year sponsorship partnership with Rochdale in Bloom, supporting a range of projects designed to enhance Rochdale town centre and celebrate community, creativity and wellbeing."

"We're delighted to work with Rochdale in Bloom and play a part in making the town centre more vibrant, welcoming and inclusive. "These beautiful flower beds are a fantastic addition to Rochdale and we're looking forward to continuing the partnership throughout the summer with activities that bring the community together."

Roy Down, Rochdale in Bloom Vice Chairman, added: "This partnership is a fantastic example of businesses and community organisations working together to make a real difference to Rochdale."

"The support from Rochdale Riverside will help us create lasting displays that residents and visitors can enjoy for years to come."



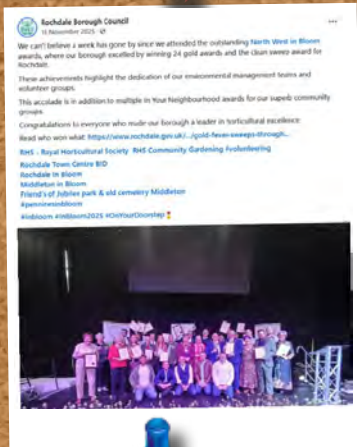
Community flower bed designers, Rochdale in Bloom vice chair and sponsors Rochdale Riverside



Camelia Chiorean (Rochdale Riverside), Roy Down (Rochdale in Bloom Vice Chair) and Kelsey Cartwright (Rochdale Riverside)



Volunteers from Rochdale Riverside, Rochdale in Bloom and the Chartered Institute of Horticulture brought the colourful displays to life



Our social media posts regularly reach tens of thousands of people.

Funding & Support

Community Investment, Sponsorship & Sustainable Partnerships

Rochdale in Bloom is incredibly proud of its diverse network of sponsors and partners. This year, alongside vital grant funding and extensive operational backing from Rochdale Borough Council, our financial partners span both local and prominent national businesses. We are deeply grateful for the generous financial support of:

- Hampton by Hilton
- Rochdale Riverside
- Jewsons
- Rochdale Borough Council
- Tetrosyl Group
- Zen Internet
- H Bell & Sons

Our highly successful annual hanging basket scheme offers a brilliant way for businesses located outside the immediate town centre to champion our entry. This year, local businesses stepped up tremendously, purchasing over 50 sponsored baskets, generating over £4,000 of income.

The baskets feature in both the Town Centre and Small City judging routes. These vibrant displays provide financial sustainability and generate amazing media coverage for the group's ongoing community work.



We're proud to be hosting the Britain in Bloom awards

We're delighted that Rochdale Town Hall will be hosting the 2026 RHS Britain in Bloom awards this October. We look forward to welcoming all finalists to Rochdale to celebrate another year of Britain in Bloom.





UK FINALIST 2026
UK GOLD WINNER 🏆 2024
UK GOLD WINNER 🏆 2022
UK GOLD WINNER 🏆 2018

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bluebird care

Myson Pages

ICON



first bus



Molesworths

britannia metals

WILLMOTT DIXON

Roebuck



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Aquatherm

admiral labels

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