

RochdaleinBloom

roots in the community



UK GOLD WINNER 🏆 2024

UK GOLD WINNER 🏆 2022

UK GOLD WINNER 🏆 2018

2026

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Introduction

Rochdale, as a town, does something that most places only talk about. We roll up our sleeves, get our hands dirty, and achieve things that people wouldn't think was possible of a small city with our resources.

It's the people that make the place, and our home.

What you'll find in these pages isn't a polished campaign. Its volunteers in their sixties drilling tree stumps to give solitary bees somewhere to nest. A group of neighbours turning a neglected corner of Bamford Court into a composting, propagating, wildlife-friendly garden on virtually no budget. A hospice where the mowing gets deliberately left in places so that spotted orchids and ragged robin can come through on their own. A community wildlife site that has recorded 572 species, not because someone paid for it, but because a group of local people decided this patch of land was worth knowing properly. A railway station planted up by primary school children for the 16th year running. A new group clearing invasive balsam from the riverbank in Norden because nobody else was going to do it.



This is what 1,000 volunteers, 90 community groups, and 3,400 hours a year look like when people genuinely care about the place they live.

We've been building this since 2010. What started with a handful of people with a shared idea has become one of the most active community movements in the North West, and it keeps growing. This year we applied for charitable status, which tells you something about where we are as an organisation: this isn't a hobby, it's a long-term commitment to In Bloom, Rochdale, and the people who live here.

And a borough that, come October, will be hosting the National in Bloom final awards ceremony right here at our own magnificent Town Hall.

None of it happens without the volunteers, the committee, the sponsors, the schools, the council teams, and the community groups who show up every single week. To all of them, this portfolio highlights your work.

Thank you



Introduction cont...

We wish all our neighbouring towns and villages all the best and hope they have another successful year. Maybe we shouldn't wish Middleton too much luck, as they are in our category? Joking apart, our friends in Middleton, Heywood and Pennines are simply amazing.

We hope the first judging day on the 21st of June is the start of another amazing year. All eyes will be on October for the presentation events, regional and national, always an excuse for a good day out.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Rochdale in Bloom Committee, Sponsors, Councillors, all the Environmental Teams (in and out of the office), Town Centre Management and most importantly the hundreds of volunteers who are making an amazing difference to our community. Also, I would like to add a personal thank you to some people who sometimes 'go under the radar': All the staff at Bowlee Nurseries and the dedication (across the borough) of The Green Volunteers.

Good luck everyone!

Michael Scott

Chairman of Rochdale in Bloom

Rochdale in Bloom Committee Members

Michael Scott – Chairperson
 Roy Down – Vice Chairperson
 Phil Starr – Secretary
 Philip Massey – Treasurer
 Louise Scott
 Christine McHugh
 Cllr Paul Ellison
 Billy Sheerin
 Sarah Down
 Jane Gartside
 James Gartside

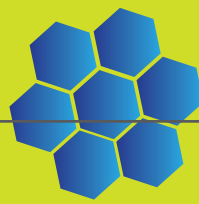


Associate Members

Ian Trickett – Environmental management
 Michael Buczman – Environmental management
 Davina Unsworth – Rochdale Boroughwide Housing



Our Entries



Albany EBFT Elevated Garden Project
 Alice Ingham Court Residents Garden
 Arnold Bagnall Court, Rochdale
 Ashfield Road Education Centre
 Balderstone Park, Rochdale
 Bamford Court
 Bamford Chapel and Norden U.R.C.
 Bee Inspired Community Garden, Rochdale
 Blooming Marvellous Garden
 Dunsterville House - Blue Pits Housing Action
 Broad Lane Community Woodland
 Castleton in Bloom
 Castleton Railway Station, Rochdale
 Castleton Village Green
 Central Mosque, Rochdale
 Cutgate Bikes
 Darul Ilm
 Deeplish Community Garden
 Denehurst Park, Rochdale
 Edenfield Road Alleygate
 Elton Street Allotments
 Faizen e Madina
 Fieldway Independant Living Scheme
 FOSAC - Syke and Cronkeyshaw Common
 Friends of Bamford Community Garden
 Friends of Caldershaw Green, Rochdale
 Friends of St Edmunds Church
 Golden Mosque, Rochdale
 Greenbank Gardeners
 Hampton by Hilton, Rochdale
 Healey Dell Heritage Centre and Tea Rooms
 Healey, Syke and Shawclough, Rochdale
 HMP Buckley Hall
 Jalalia Jaame Mosque
 Jamia Masjid Bilal
 Kirkholt and Balderstone in Bloom, Rochdale
 Kirkholt Million - Rhodes Ravine
 Little Dell / Joan Turner Memorial Meadow,
 Rochdale
 Lock 50 Gardening Group (Rochdale Canal)
 Mencap at Falinge Park
 Mere Street Improvement Project
 Moss Row
 Moss Row Community Allotment Society
 Moss Row Woodlands
 Moss St Youth Centre
 Mountside View
 Neeli Mosque and Islamic Centre
 New Pioneers Park + Walking Trail

Newbold Community Growing Together Garden Project
 Norden Bowling and Social Club
 Norden in Bloom
 Norden Jubilee Park, Rochdale
 Oulder Hill Memorial Garden
 Pegasus Court Gardens
 Petrus Incredible Edible Rochdale - PIER
 Q Gardens in the Community
 Roch Valley Outdoor Learning Site
 Rochdale AFC 'Wonderwall'
 Rochdale Environmental Action Group (REAG)
 Rochdale Fire Station
 Rochdale Golf Club
 Rochdale Train Station
 Rochdale in Bloom
 Rochdale in Bloom Community Remembrance Memorial Garden
 Rochdale Parish Church of St Chad's
 Rochdale Town Centre (Rochdale in Bloom)
 Shelfield Cottage Garden, Norden
 Spotland and Falinge, Rochdale
 Spotland Community Centre
 Spotland Primary School
 Spotland Walking Trail, Rochdale
 Springfield Park Bees CIC
 Springhill Hospice, Rochdale
 St Gabriel's RC Primary School
 St John the Baptist RC Church
 St Marys in the Baum
 Stoney Hill Meadow
 Stoney Hill Community Wildlife Area
 The Baum, Rochdale
 'The Enchanted Scented Garden'
 The Flying Horse Hotel, Rochdale
 The Friends of Norden Jubilee Park
 The Friends of Taylor Park
 The Oxford
 The Shawclough Triangle
 The Willows Dementia Hub
 Tulip Grove Community Orchard & Wildflower Meadow
 UKIM Madina Masjid Newbold
 Vintage Worx Community Development Trust Falinge Park Com-
 munity Restoration
 WHAG Gabriel Court
 Yew Court
 Zen Internet



Partners

H Bell & Sons

H Bell & Sons have been with us for years now, and their support goes well beyond writing a cheque. As a long-standing Rochdale business with deep roots in the community, they've shown up with materials, with volunteers, and with genuine enthusiasm for everything we do.

Their team has helped with planting days, site improvements, and hands-on projects across the borough. Most recently supporting the refurbishment of planters at Castleton Railway Station and work at Springhill Hospice, and volunteering at Taylor Park and the World War 2 memorial gardens in the town centre. When they say they're proud to support us, you can see it in the work.

Rochdale Borough Council

In Bloom in Rochdale is built on the co-operative spirit that's in the DNA of this town, and Rochdale Borough Council is a fundamental part of that.

Their environmental management teams, in and out of the office, are behind so much of what makes our entries shine: sweeping streets, enforcing environmental standards, and growing the thousands of plants that fill our hanging baskets and saddle planters every year.

The council's Bowlee Nursery alone produces over 250,000 plants annually, grown from seedlings on site. We're grateful for everything they do. We also acknowledge that Rochdale Borough Council supports Middleton in Bloom, Heywood in Bloom and Pennines in Bloom, so quite the challenge and a huge commitment to green spaces across the whole borough.

Jewsons

Jewson joined us as an official partner through their connection with H Bell & Sons, and they've quickly become a valued part of the team. Their contribution last year of £3,500 has made a real difference to what we can achieve, and their support with timber, compost, and materials has fed directly into projects at Springhill Hospice and beyond.

Zen

Zen is a B Corporation, and their involvement in Rochdale in Bloom reflects the values that sit at the heart of their business: sustainability, biodiversity, and social responsibility. From managing their own eco-friendly grounds to supporting community spaces and local causes, they've been a brilliant partner for many years now. This year they've continued expanding their wildflower planting, investing around £15,000 in replacing the ageing pump system in their grounds pond to keep it healthy for fish, plants, and visiting wildlife.



Environmental Responsibility

If there's one thing that ties together everything we do in Rochdale in Bloom, it's that we're not just trying to make things look nice, but to make them better for wildlife, people, and the long-term health of our borough.

The theme this year is "Bring it Home", and nowhere does that feel more true than in our environmental work. Across the borough, communities are taking ownership of the spaces around them, not waiting for someone else to sort it out, but getting stuck in themselves.

Whether it's tackling invasive species, restoring lost habitats, or simply changing how we mow a meadow, the change is happening from the ground up.

Tackling invasive species

One of the most impressive new environmental stories this year comes from Norden, where a newly formed group led by Louise Corlett has been carrying out regular Himalayan balsam bashing sessions. It's time-consuming, unglamorous work, but their work is really starting to make an impact.

The same battle has been fought at Caldershaw Green, where the Green Volunteers have knocked back swathes of balsam and worked with Countryside Rangers to fell diseased trees and create dead-hedging and log piles. These have become fantastic new habitats for insects and small mammals. Small stumps have been left standing and drilled with holes to attract nesting bees.

Biodiversity in action

Across Rochdale, our green spaces are getting wilder in the best possible way. Differential mowing has been introduced at Denehurst Park, creating corridors for insects that formal mowing regimes would otherwise eliminate. At Springhill Hospice, the regular mowing schedule has been reduced to allow meadow areas to develop naturally, with red campion, ragged robin, common spotted orchids, Camassia, fritillaria, and bluebells appearing across the site.

Stoney Hill Community Wildlife Area has now recorded 572 species on site, with 36 new ones added in 2025 alone. That's the result of years of methodical habitat creation and careful management by a dedicated group of volunteers who really know what they're doing. They were the first group in Rochdale to receive a Green Flag Community award and were commended in both the biodiversity and volunteer categories in their very first year.

The council's own plant nursery at Bowlee has adopted biological pest control methods, including nematode worms and parasitic wasps to reduce chemical use across its 250,000+ annual plants. The Biodiversity Net Gain payment system now in place means developers who impact the local environment pay towards biodiversity projects. A first payment of £100,000 has already been received.



Environmental Responsibility

Wildflowers and waterways

Native woodland bulbs were planted with St Vincent's RC Primary School at Caldershaw Green this year, funded by First Bus. Roy Down, who co-ordinated the planting, said the support from First Bus had been fantastic: last year it was wildflower seed, this year woodland bulbs. The more we can connect children with these spaces, the more likely those spaces are to be cared for in the future.

Broadfield Slopes, behind the Town Hall, has also undergone a significant restoration funded by the National Lottery Heritage Fund. Historic drainage channels and natural pools have been reinstated, and beautiful etchings in the ground now tell the story of the site and its history. A bioblitz is planned for this summer to monitor all the wildlife coming back to the area.

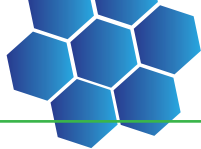
Recycling, waste, and shared knowledge

Rochdale Borough Council's environment and recycling officers continue to run education programmes across schools, colleges, and community centres, raising awareness that small changes in behaviour add up to big impacts. Eco schools that work with the local community to reduce waste and single use plastic are growing in number, and the Great British Spring Clean sees thousands of residents tidy their patch every year. We can't forget, though, the residents who are out in all weathers, every weekday, doing their part to litter pick. In Cutgate alone we have two such people!

Fly-tipping is being tackled effectively in areas like Ashworth Valley, where cameras and signage installed by the council and local community have reduced incidents to almost zero. What used to be a prime fly-tipping hotspot is now a hidden beauty spot people actually want to visit.

At Bamford Court, one of the older and smaller entries on our route, composting is taken seriously: there's a water butt, a hot compost bin, a pallet compost bin, and a leaf mould container all on site. They're a great example of how environmental practice doesn't have to come at scale, all it takes is some commitment.





Horticultural Achievement

Horticultural excellence in Rochdale isn't a single style or a single story. We use dozens of different approaches playing out across parks, gardens, allotments, station platforms, and hospice grounds, each one reflecting the people and place behind it.

This year's theme, Bring it Home, runs through the horticultural work too. There's a shift away from purely decorative planting towards schemes that serve a purpose beyond looking good. Grow-your-own, edible gardens, community orchards, sensory beds for wellbeing, wildflower corridors for pollinators. The planting is becoming more meaningful, more sustainable, and more tied to the people who look after it.

From traditional to wild

You'll see the full range on this year's route. Denehurst Park's herbaceous borders and sunken gardens represent the formal, traditional end of the spectrum as they're beautifully maintained, full of seasonal colour, and deeply loved by the local community. At the other end, Caldershaw Green's wildflower meadows, log piles, and native woodland plantings are as wild and natural as it gets.

Springhill Hospice is a particular highlight, now back with us after taking a couple of years out. A new winter garden was planted by patients' rooms in 2025 full of spring-flowering shrubs, winter heathers, dogwoods and winter aconites. The sensory garden has been transformed with a rockery and alpine planting. The vegetable garden has been reconfigured for greater productivity. Three memorial orchards produce fruit for the kitchen and for volunteer jam-makers. There is a Japanese garden, a herb garden, meadow areas with orchids and fritillaries. Fifteen dedicated garden volunteers and a team of corporate supporters help make it all possible.

The Friends of Taylor Park have planted a community orchard in their most significant project yet, leaving a living legacy for future generations. Meanwhile, herb planters maintained by local school children bring a plot-to-plate element to the neighbourhood park.

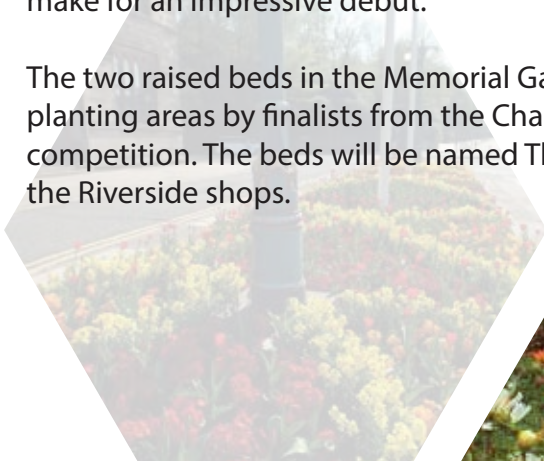
Growing for wellbeing

The Growth Project at Kellett Street Allotments has been running since 2008 and just keeps growing. Operated on 1.5 acres in one of Rochdale's most deprived areas, it offers people with mental health challenges the opportunity to grow, cook, and eat their own food. In doing so, they find skills, community, and purpose. Everything is grown from seed, they make their own compost, harvest their own water, and recycle everything they can. They've now opened their garden under the National Garden Scheme for 11 consecutive years, receiving their 10-year commemorative trowel along the way.

New entries and fresh energy

2026 sees Bamford Golf Course joining Rochdale in Bloom for the very first time. New flower patches, vibrant hanging baskets, seasonal displays, and a commitment to long-term biodiversity management make for an impressive debut.

The two raised beds in the Memorial Gardens in the town centre are being transformed into sensory planting areas by finalists from the Chartered Institute of Horticulture Young Horticulturist of the Year competition. The beds will be named The Jolly Josh Beds, honouring the local charity, and sponsored by the Riverside shops.



Community Participation

Rochdale in Bloom is, first and foremost, all about the people. The plants are the visible result, but the real story is about who's out there doing the work and why.

Since 2010, we've grown from a small group of founding members into a network of over 90 community groups, with more than 1,000 volunteers across the borough. That growth hasn't happened because of a grand plan but because people kept telling their neighbours, their friends at the mosque, the parents at the school gate. And the word spread naturally.

This year we've confirmed 3,400+ volunteer hours across our structured activities. That figure only covers what we can formally record, and it doesn't include the weekly leadership, coordination, and mentoring that our voluntary management group puts in year-round. The real total is considerably higher.

A borough-wide movement

Our entries in 2026 span residents' associations, faith communities, schools, care homes, housing schemes, hospices, charities, businesses, and sports clubs. We also have entries from mosques and churches. We have entries from a golf course in its first year and a community wildlife area working towards its second Green Flag. We have a community growing project for people with mental health challenges and a railway station planted by primary school children for the 16th consecutive year.

That breadth is the point. Bloom is for everyone, and the more kinds of people and places that take part, the stronger we, as a borough, become. Rochdale's Co-operative heritage runs deep, and in many ways In Bloom is the same idea. We're stronger together than apart.

Young people at the heart

Schools across the borough are involved in Bloom in ways that go beyond ticking an environmental education box. At Castleton Railway Station, four primary schools — Castleton Primary, St Edwards CE Primary, St Gabriel's RC Primary, and St John's Thornham CE Primary — have been planting up the platforms together for 16 years. These children have never known a Castleton Station without flowers.

At Caldershaw Green, St Vincent's RC Primary School planted native woodland bulbs with the volunteer group. At Taylor Park, children from a local school tend herb planters they put in themselves. At Stoney Hill, the local nursery takes children on nature walks and bug hunts through the wildlife area. At Denehurst Park, a secondary school has its own vegetable garden in the grounds.

The youngest volunteers are still at nursery age. The oldest are in their nineties. Everyone finds a way to contribute.



Community Participation

Wellbeing and inclusion

The weekly therapeutic Growing Project, delivered in partnership with Mind, sees 15 service users struggling with mental health challenges per day and gives you a hint as to what horticulture really means in Rochdale. It's not just plants and places, but health and human connection.

This year we also delivered a four-day improvement project at Springhill Hospice involving 29 volunteers and 464 recorded hours of practical gardening work that directly benefits patients, families and staff. Faith communities including the Golden Mosque are active participants. School assemblies and youth environmental initiatives extend our reach further.

In 2026, Rochdale in Bloom achieved charitable status. It's a formal recognition of what we've always been: an organisation working in the long-term interest of the community, accountable and built to last.

Business support

Local businesses bring more than money, it's people and practical expertise.

H Bell & Sons, Zen Internet and Jewson are our principal partners, but dozens of other local businesses have contributed across the year. Sponsored hanging baskets have raised £2,000, much of it visible in the town centre. Volunteers from H Bell & Sons joined the railway station planting. Corporate teams have carried out gardening sessions at Springhill Hospice. And our local football team, who are newly promoted, have run a volunteering week for staff and volunteers to clean up their local area.



Route Map



Route Itinerary

1. Rochdale Golf Course
2. Taylor Park
3. Caldershaw Green
4. Denehurst Park
5. Stoney Hill Community Wildlife Area
6. Bamford Court
7. Zen Internet
8. Castleton Railway Station
9. Castleton Village Green & War Memorial
10. Springhill Hospice
11. Rochdale Town Centre



Rochdale Golf Club

Rochdale Golf Club are new this year and are starting as they mean to go on, taking on the role of official starting point on the route.

Work has already been happening around the clubhouse. New flower patches, hanging baskets, better managed natural spaces. More importantly, the club has been thinking about how it looks after its land going forward. Environmental responsibility is becoming an increasing focus with recycling initiatives, reuse of natural materials, wildlife habitats, sustainable water use and future biodiversity projects on the horizon.

The club is used by a lot more than golfers too. Families, walkers and volunteers are in and out throughout the year, so the improvements here benefit a wider community than you might expect.

Members and volunteers support planting, course presentation, maintenance and environmental improvements across the site.



Taylor Park

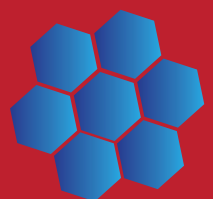
Taylor Park, Norden, has been part of the local landscape for a very long time and if you know the area's history, you might know that the site was once part of the former Norden Racecourse. These days it's something rather different, a much-loved community green space maintained by the Friends of Taylor Park, a dedicated group of local volunteers who keep the park looking its best throughout the year.

Their most significant project recently has been the creation of a community orchard. Planted by the Friends group, it will provide blossom and fruit for years to come, leaving a genuine legacy for future generations. Seasonal planting, mature trees and open green spaces provide colour and interest throughout the year and support a variety of wildlife including birds, bees and butterflies.

Local Scout groups have been involved in activities in the park, and a nearby school has taken on the maintenance of herb planters that were installed by a local company. The children visit regularly to check on their growing plants and learn about the food chain.

Regular litter picks and maintenance sessions keep the park welcoming and well-presented, and the park is used weekly by children from a local nursery for outdoor learning.

Rochdale in Bloom and Rochdale Borough Council support the Friends group, alongside contributions from local businesses.



Caldershaw Green

Over the past few years this site has been transformed through the partnership of local residents, Green Volunteers and the Countryside Ranger Service and with financial support from local councillors when it's been needed.

This year the headline development is a brand new bridge across Caldershaw Brook, replacing the old one that had rotted and become unsafe. Funded by local councillors, it reconnects two sides of the Green and restores a vital access route for the hundreds of people who walk through the site every day. There's also been dozens of new trees planted adding to the more than 60 fruit trees we planted last year, new steps and handrails installed, new pathways laid across the site, and the continuation of extensive dead-hedging work that's creating habitat for wildlife.

The Green Volunteers have put in an enormous amount of work over winter and spring, working with Rangers Bob and Richard to fell diseased and dead trees, create log piles, drill stumps to attract nesting bees, and knock back invasive Himalayan balsam. Planting continues with woodland wildflower seed, and the three wildflower meadow areas are being reseeded with pollinator-friendly perennial and annual species.

Hundreds of native woodland bulbs were planted with St Vincent's RC Primary School this spring, funded by First Bus, and Redwood School are regular visitors. Rochdale Field Naturalists carry out regular surveys, and every year the data confirms that biodiversity on this site is growing.



Denehurst Park

Denehurst Park has gone through an extraordinary transformation over the past decade. New paths, a wetland swale with picturesque bridges, a stumpery, an orchard, wood carvings, a prehistoric-themed garden, a pirate-themed play area; the park has something for everyone, from toddlers to naturalists.

The lush and immaculately kept herbaceous garden remains the focal point of the park.

This year, a more deliberate approach to differential mowing has been introduced, leaving certain areas of grass to grow longer for insects. These unmown corridors have become valuable habitat for a wide range of invertebrates that formal mowing regimes would otherwise exclude.

Redwood Secondary Special School maintains their own vegetable garden in the park, ensuring that young people with additional needs have a meaningful outdoor learning space.

The park continues to welcome volunteers, school groups and the wider community throughout the year, and remains one of the most visited and most celebrated green spaces in the borough.

Denehurst House is currently being renovated to provide five self-contained flats for local armed forces veterans and a new café downstairs for all to use.

Denehurst won a North West in Bloom Golden Award in 2022, and the work to build on that achievement continues.





Stoney Hill Community Wildlife Area

The Stoney Hill Nature Watch oversees the area with the ambition to create and protect an exceptional urban wildlife site. The group works in partnership with Rochdale Council to manage the land, with a five-year plan taking us from 2024-2029.

After council houses were demolished on this site in the 1950s, the land drifted into a dumping ground. Over years of community effort, a meadow was established, a woodland path created, a wetland area developed, and non-native species methodically removed. Now this is one of the most biodiverse community-managed sites in the borough.

By the end of 2025, 572 species had been recorded on site, 36 added in 2025 alone. All records are shared with the Greater Manchester Ecology Unit. The group was the first in Rochdale to receive a Green Flag Community Award and was commended in both the biodiversity and volunteer categories in their very first year of entering. They're also being considered for Site of Biological Importance status, a process that considers just seven sites per year across Rochdale.

Stoney Hill Nature Watch doesn't just manage the land, they share what they know. Talks on surveying for mammals, identifying hoverflies and understanding bees have been given. A free Family Woodland Activity Day drew around 100 children and was attended by the Mayor, local councillors and MP Elsie Blundell. The group advises other organisations across the borough and works with the council on biodiversity strategy.

The local Willows Nursery uses the site as an outdoor classroom, taking children on nature walks and bug hunts through the safe woodland route the group has created. It's the definition of a community asset.





Bamford Court

The communal gardens at Bamford Court have some genuinely difficult areas to work with: deep shade under trees, steep banking, and soil that had been neglected for years.

A small core of four residents, aged between 60 and 72, have turned that around. Beds have been dug at the front and back of the building, with magnolia, forsythia and acers going in alongside mixed herbaceous borders, shrubs and roses. Ten hanging baskets are overwintered with geraniums, then bulked up with plug plants for the summer. The banking area traditionally wasn't touched but has recently been cleared of nettles and brambles to hold new plants, although they don't give up their territory easily! Nettles have been deliberately kept in one area to support butterflies laying eggs and feeding.

Sustainability runs through everything here. There's a water butt, a hot compost bin, a pallet compost bin and a leaf mould container. But the team also make their own liquid fertiliser and encourage wildlife with log piles, bee hotels and bird boxes. It's a small site doing everything it can to grow smart and waste nothing. Most of the plants are grown from seed, propagated from cuttings or divided to keep costs down. This is grassroots growing at its most straightforward.





Zen Internet

Zen Internet's headquarters in Rochdale sits in beautifully managed grounds, and as a certified B Corporation, looking after those grounds isn't just a nice thing to do, it's part of who they are.

Over the past year, Zen has continued expanding their wildflower planting to encourage bee pollination. They've cleared silt and weeds from the bottom of their ornamental pond and invested around £15,000 in replacing 30-year-old circulation pumps to keep the water properly aerated, essential for the fish, aquatic plants and other pond life that thrive there.

They also joined the volunteers at Castleton Railway Station to help refurbish the planters ahead of the school planting day.

Zen has committed to reducing carbon emissions in line with science-based 1.5°C and net-zero targets. Bug houses for bees and solitary pollinators are in place on the grounds. And a memorial garden provides a quiet space for staff to reflect.



Castleton Railway Station

Every June for the past 16 years, children from four local primary schools (Castleton Primary, St Edwards CE Primary, St Gabriel's RC Primary and St John's Thornham CE Primary) have arrived with compost-covered gloves and by the end of the morning, two platforms that are used by trains between Manchester and Yorkshire are absolutely transformed.

The idea came from Billy Sheerin, a Bloomer for 20 years and former Castleton ward councillor. He remembered what railway stations used to look like in the days of steam when station masters along the line competed with one another for the best presented station and wanted to take Castleton Railway Station back to then. Originally just one platform, now both platforms are planted with raised beds and hayrack planters on each side, maintained through the summer by the Friends of Castleton Station.

Jason and Sam from the council's Bowlee Nursery come along on the day, helping the children plant and sharing their expertise about which plants work best in an exposed station environment. It's a great example of what can be achieved when volunteers and council staff work together.

Rod Hughes from the Friends group litter-picks the station regularly, keeping both platforms clean and welcoming year-round. Two local Greater Manchester Deputy Lieutenants, Louise Scott and Azrar Ul Haq, have lent their support, as well as local companies Zen Internet and H Bell & Sons. And last year, the Flying Scotsman passed through. An extraordinary moment that reminded everyone why a cared-for station matters.

It's right on track for another brilliant year.





Castleton Village Green and War Memorial

Castleton Village Green began as a priority project for the Rochdale in Bloom committee around the centenary of the end of World War One in 2018. The village had never had a proper memorial to its fallen, and the committee decided to change that.

Working with local businesses and volunteers, a memorial stone was installed, inscribed and blessed at a multi-faith service attended by 200 members of the community. Metal railings were built by engineering apprentices at Rochdale Training, floodlights added, and a curved memorial wall constructed to bear the names of Castleton's fallen from both World Wars. And of course, flowers were planted to complete the theme.

The Green has become a genuine focal point for village life. The place where the community gathers for Christmas lights, Easter, Maypole dancing and the annual Remembrance Service each November.

The latest addition is a memorial bench with hard standing being laid, and volunteer bricklayer Chris Brogan building the wall behind it. The bench will sit under a woodland canopy, giving villagers somewhere to sit, reflect and remember. As the inscription says: They shall never be forgotten.



Springhill Hospice

Springhill Hospice's gardens offer patients and their families something that medicine can't: beauty, calm, and connection with nature.

In recent years, the grounds have been transformed. Adding to the Japanese garden, a new winter garden was planted by patients' rooms in 2025 with support from Harry Bell from H Bell & Sons, full of spring-flowering shrubs, winter heathers, dogwoods, bulbs and winter aconites. They bring colour and scent at the time of year when it's most needed, and a haven for early pollinators.

The sensory garden has been given a new rockery with alpine plants and spring bulbs, creating a quiet corner away from the main building. The regular mowing regime has been reduced to allow meadow areas to develop, with red campion, ragged robin, common spotted orchids, Camassia, fritillaria and bluebells all now appearing. Three memorial orchards produce fruit for the kitchen and for the volunteer jam-makers who sell at seasonal fayres. A vegetable garden feeds the hospice kitchen, with surpluses sold to staff and visitors. Outside the café, a herb garden provides fresh ingredients and a fragrant place to sit.

Fifteen garden volunteers keep this all going, supported by corporate volunteering teams and the Hospice's Business Buddies. The Rochdale in Bloom core team delivered a four-day improvement project here involving 29 volunteers and 464 recorded hours over the last year.



Rochdale Town Centre

Rochdale town centre is nearing the end of a £400 million transformation. From the restored Grade I listed Town Hall to the new murals appearing on walls across the area, the town centre is now an inviting place with welcoming public spaces.

Broadfield slopes The restoration of Broadfield slopes behind the town hall is now complete thanks to £1m funding from the National Lottery Heritage Fund. Historic natural pools and drainage channels have been reinstated, and ground-level etchings now tell the story of the slopes and their history.

A bioblitz is planned for this summer to record all the wildlife returning to this newly restored site. It's a remarkable project that's connected the town's natural and cultural heritage.

Memorial Gardens: The Memorial Gardens opposite the town hall continue to be maintained with a thoughtful mix of formal seasonal planting and a growing number of drought-tolerant, sustainable species.

The four raised beds that are part of the WW1 Remembrance Garden are being given a significant upgrade by finalists from the Chartered Institute of Horticulture Young Horticulturist of the Year competition who have planted two of them up as sensory gardens. The beds will be named The Jolly Josh Beds, in honour of the local charity, and are sponsored by the Riverside shops.

The Remembrance Garden was originally a town centre show garden in memory of those who gave their lives through the war. When the time came, it was too popular to dismantle and was moved to a permanent home in the Memorial Gardens. Conceived and built by the Rochdale in Bloom team with the support of 2018 sponsors Marshalls, it was installed with the help of volunteers, H Bell & Son and Armed Forces veterans. At the opening, Wing Commander David Forbes, President of Rochdale's Royal British Legion, described it as a super memorial that fits perfectly with the Town Hall and Memorial Gardens and engages the whole of Rochdale.

Rochdale families suffered enormously in the First World War. Many Lancashire Pals battalions were recruited from this town and the surrounding communities, and the loss was felt in nearly every street. The Memorial Garden is a reminder of that and a prompt to reflect on it.

The installation continues to grow and in 2024 a new display was added to mark the 80th anniversary of the D-Day landings.

Culture and community We've three new murals that have been designed as part of last year's Common Walls International Mural Festival, added to a rising number of murals that showcase everything Rochdale has to be proud of.

DREAMS by Hayley Garner on The Walk, Blockbuster on the Wetherspoons building (the former Regal Cinema) and Epic, a new piece that measures 10 metres high and 32 metres long.

Street Eat drew over 3,000 people to Town Hall Square for a celebration of Rochdale's food and drink scene. Families, music, performers and traders all came together for the event which



Rochdale Town Centre

remarkably had lovely weather for a weekend in May!

Baillie Street, a historic street with Grade II listed buildings, has been given a spruce-up with hanging baskets, planters, artwork and an art bench.

Green infrastructure Rochdale railway station's entrance planters have been refreshed with pollinator-focused planting. Number One Riverside, which consolidates 1,800 council employees from 33 buildings into one sustainably designed workplace, uses heat pumps, solar power and a living roof terrace managed by staff. The building produces 57% less CO₂ than current building regulations require. And as part of the Town Hall restoration project, a new substation was installed to supply heat pumps and EV charging bays with electricity from a local solar farm.



RBC Environmental Management

Rochdale Borough Council manages over 100 parks and open spaces across the borough, together with all borough cemeteries. Environmental responsibility sits at the heart of their work.

Green Flag Awards

Rochdale Borough Council now holds 12 Green Flag Awards, with five being part of the Bloom route or programme: Broadfield Park, Rochdale Memorial Gardens, Denehurst Park, Packer Spout & St Chad's Gardens, and Springfield Park.

The Green Flag scheme provides valuable independent feedback, helping shape and improve standards year on year.

Stoney Hill Community Wildlife Area became the first community-managed site in Rochdale to receive a Green Flag Community Award in 2025 a tremendous achievement for the volunteer group.

Sustainability and tree planting

The council's long-term sustainability team includes a climate change project manager, an EV infrastructure advisor and a woodlands and natural capital projects officer. Over the past eight years, more than 19,000 trees and hedgerow shrubs have been planted across the borough improving air quality, reducing noise, supporting flood alleviation and tackling climate change.

Sites across Rochdale are being assessed for conversion from grass to community woodlands, orchards and wildflower meadows. The Biodiversity Net Gain payment system which charges developers for environmental harm and directs funding to biodiversity projects has already generated a first payment of £100,000.

Bowlee Garden Nursery

The council's own Bowlee Garden Nursery grows over 250,000 plants a year from seedlings on site. This removes the carbon that would be generated by importing fully grown plants from Holland, and provides a locally-grown, locally-adapted plant supply for hanging baskets, planters, parks and community projects. Biological pest control methods including nematode worms and parasitic wasps have replaced chemical pesticides in the nursery.



Year-Round Involvement



Rochdale in Bloom isn't something that switches on in May and switches off in September. It's a year-round commitment and that's probably what makes it work here in Rochdale.

Spring means bulb planting, thousands of them every year, litter picking, and the annual station planting day at Castleton. Summer means watering, maintaining, and the hard graft of keeping everything looking its best through the heat. Autumn means clean-ups, mulching, cutting back. Winter means workshops, planning, and the physical work that's actually better done in the cold, hedge laying, tree planting, habitat creation.

Our volunteers stay involved through seasonal community action days, ongoing maintenance rotas, events that connect green spaces with health and creativity, and the informal sharing of skills, advice and plant cuttings across the whole network. When Stoney Hill Nature Watch gives a talk to the Caldershaw Green Volunteers, that's Bloom in action.

The Bloom spirit runs through every month of the year and the momentum that builds because of that is what keeps the whole thing moving forward. In 2010 our entry featured just two 'It's Your Neighbourhood' entries. In 2018, Rochdale won 30 IYN awards. In 2019, IYN judging took two whole days, and by 2021 we needed six days of judging.

In Bloom in Rochdale continues to grow.

Love Where You Live



Press Coverage

Rochdale in Bloom has continued to capture positive press coverage throughout the year, from local papers to regional media. Our efforts are regularly celebrated for their creativity, collaboration and impact. What shines through in every headline is the strength of local pride and partnership.

Support Springhill Hospice and dedicate a sunflower in memory of your loved one

18 May 2022



Springhill Hospice Sunflower Appeal

Rochdale in Bloom honoured by the late Queen Elizabeth with a Jubilee tree

03 October 2022



Photo: Rochdale Online

Roy Down, Chairman of Rochdale in Bloom

Rochdale in Bloom, one of Greater Manchester's leading community organisations, is celebrating after being chosen by the Lord Lieutenant of Greater Manchester to receive a tree from the 'Tree of Trees'.

Schoolchildren plant up Castleton station ready for 'In Bloom'

18 June 2021



Headteacher Lindsay Torrance supervised Castleton Community Primary pupils, pictured with Richard Hagan of Crystal Doors and Councillor Billy Sheerin

Children from Castleton Community Primary and St Edwards Church of England School planted up Castleton Railway Station on Thursday 10 June.

Rochdale in Bloom group to welcome judges to town

22 July 2022



Norden Jubilee Park - Regional judging day for Rochdale in Bloom in 2019

Rochdale in Bloom reaches prestigious Britain in Bloom nationals for a second time

11 February 2022



Rochdale last reached the nationals in 2018 - winning a gold medal - after being nominated to go forward as the Small City category representative for the North West



Bilal Mosque shortlisted for British Beacon Mosque award

10 November 2021



Bilal Masjid

Rochdale's Bilal Mosque has been shortlisted for a British Beacon Mosque award after winning a new category in the annual North West in Bloom competition.

Bilal has been shortlisted for 'Best Green Initiative' which is now open for public voting until 1 December.

Thousands of purple crocuses planted across Rochdale

17 January 2022



Thousands of purple crocuses have been planted around Rochdale as a joint initiative between Rochdale in Bloom, Norden in Bloom and the Rotary Club of Rochdale

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