

## Route Planning & Itineraries

### On the day

- If meeting them off the train or plane, give the judges time to relax.
- Try not to go straight into the tour. In most cases however, this will not apply.
- Remember the judges don't start until you say.

### Presentation

- Your presentation can be at any time during the judges' visit, but it can be advantageous in the middle of the tour if coupled with a comfort stop.
- Keep introductions to a minimum, and spread them throughout the visit if you can.
- Don't overcrowd the starting venue, and ensure it is fit for purpose.
- Usually a brief welcome is given, some judges will respond to put entrants at ease.
- The presentation ideally should be PowerPoint, but it can relate to leaflets and publicity arranged around the room. However, try to keep this to a minimum as judges can't assimilate massive displays.
- Your presentation shouldn't repeat what judges will see on visit. Try and introduce other aspects including personal touches.

### Start of tour

- Give each judge a copy of your itinerary and a map. Relate the information to the marking sheet criteria, with a small photo if possible. This is very important for judges' assimilation process.
- Vehicles should have good vision and not be too cramped.
- Three people accompanying should be the maximum, one a timekeeper with a runner up front.
- Careful with vintage cars; they are novel, but they do break down!
- Don't give judges vast amounts of additional material as they need to travel light.

### During tour

- Try to introduce judges to key people as they proceed, particularly It's Your Neighbourhood projects.
- On sections between places of no interest exchange people on board to give further information.
- Don't try to cram too much in.
- Bin days and market days aren't a problem to judges.
- Should things go wrong, don't panic! Be honest with judges - they are human.
- School visits aren't really possible during August, think of alternatives to involve young people.
- Careful with your experts, over enthusiasm can cost you time so make sure everyone knows to stick to their time slot.
- There's no need to include your recycling depot; judges will ask the relevant questions.
- Heritage projects should have a horticultural element if possible.
- Press calls are useful. These can take place at any time, and are a good way of getting publicity for your group as well as the RHS.
- Don't worry about including walking sections where appropriate. This is often better than rushing by in a vehicle.
- Judges may request a stop occasionally to note a project or point of interest not described.
- Judges like to sit at either side of vehicle to take notes, but will separate to talk to as many people as possible, so that notes can be shared later.
- At the end of the visit don't overburden judges with masses of stalls or photographs they can't assimilate. It's their time to circulate, and they will want to give a vote of thanks.
- Should an overrun be unavoidable explain this to the judges in advance, but try to keep to an absolute minimum.
- Finally, make sure judges catch their trains or planes on time.