

Bloom finalist story

Conserving water the smart way

Image: [Sandra to send over an image of town centre plants and sensors if possible](#)

Caption: Some planters are in full sunlight, some are in shade. Some display more traditional ornamental plants and others contain year-round, pollinator-friendly plants.

Word count: 307

Abergavenny in Bloom, one of 25 first-time Bloom finalists for 2023, is trialling a new smart system to help conserve water in the town.

“Last summer was a particularly dry one in Monmouthshire which presented challenges around watering,” explains Sandra Rosser, Town Clerk and Responsible Finance Officer for Abergavenny Town Council. “We engaged a contractor to bring water to the town three times a week. We also installed a standpipe from April to October. This wasn’t enough. We needed to make changes before the summer.”

Supported by the Welsh government, Abergavenny Town Council is adopting a new digital infrastructure introducing digital signage, town apps and smart street furniture to enable the town to collect data and connect with locals and visitors better. As part of this initiative, Abergavenny in Bloom is piloting the use of smart technology to help tackle its water challenge.

Sensors will be fitted in 15 planters located around the town centre. They will detect when the plants need water or other nutrients. This information can then be accessed via an online gateway, which means water won’t be wasted and volunteers will know exactly when to water.

Water butts are also part of the solution. Even in dry areas, the RHS estimates that 24,000 litres could be collected from roofs each year. In Abergavenny, an 800-litre pillar water butt will be installed and the aim is to roll butts out across the town centre attaching them to downpipes. Local businesses are getting involved, providing sponsorship (and their downpipes). The aim is to halve the amount of mains water used for watering.

Abergavenny in Bloom, Holt Community Gardeners and Llandudno in Bloom are the three Welsh entrants selected as Britain in Bloom finalists this year. They join 41 other outstanding groups looking to impress the judges in the summer with their efforts to improve their local area.

Stay tuned to follow this group’s progress.