Hulme Walfield
and Somerford Booths
Parish Council

Good Design Award

Guidance and Process

Adopted 19th November 2026

Context

Hulme Walfield and Somerford Booths Parish Council has a key role in the planning process providing recommendations to the Local Planning Authority (Cheshire East) on all local applications.

In establishing this award, the Parish Council wishes to give public recognition to two important aspects:
1.The recognition of good design principles as they are applied to new buildings and housing development
2.The recognition of schemes which promote ecological diversity or enhance the appearance of our rural environment

The Parish Council will make two annual awards (based on a calendar year) – one for “best in class” for good design, and one for “best in class” in promoting ecological diversity. There would be 2 awards in each category to recognise both single and multiple unit developments and environmental schemes. Awards are based on external design only.

Awarding Criteria – Good Design

The following criteria are used as awarding criteria. The criteria are equally weighted, and a building or development doesn’t need to overtly meet all the criteria to be considered.

- **Functionality:** Every building must serve a clear purpose. This principle ensures that spaces are designed to meet the needs of their users effectively.
- **Aesthetics**: Aesthetic considerations involve creating visually pleasing structures that harmonise with their surroundings. This includes the use of proportion, scale, and colour to achieve a balanced and attractive appearance. A well-designed building should evoke a positive emotional response from its users and the community.
- **Sustainability:** Sustainable design principles focus on minimizing environmental impact and promoting long-term viability. This includes using energy-efficient systems, sustainable materials, and designs that integrate with the natural environment. Sustainable buildings aim to reduce carbon footprints and enhance the quality of life for occupants
- **Contextual Integration**: Buildings should respond to their surrounding environment, considering local culture, climate, and landscape. This principle ensures that a structure complements its setting and contributes positively to the community. Contextual design can enhance the building's relevance and functionality.
- **Balance and Harmony:** Achieving balance in design involves creating a sense of stability and coherence. This can be accomplished through symmetry or deliberate asymmetry, ensuring that different elements of the building work together harmoniously. Balance contributes to the overall aesthetic and functional quality of the structure.
- **Proportion and Scale:** The relationship between different elements of a building should be proportionate to one another and to the human scale. This principle ensures that spaces feel comfortable and inviting, enhancing user experience
- **Materiality:** The choice of materials plays a crucial role in architectural design. Materials should be selected not only for their aesthetic qualities but also for their durability, sustainability, and ability to convey the intended message of the design. Material honesty—using materials that reflect their true nature—is essential for creating authentic spaces

Awarding Criteria – Ecological

The following criteria are used as awarding criteria. The criteria are equally weighted, and a building or development doesn't need to overtly meet all the criteria to be considered.

- **Ecological Integrity:** Ecological integrity forms the cornerstone of sustainability. It emphasises preserving and restoring natural systems, ensuring they can continue to function and provide the essential services upon which all life depends. This principle calls for the responsible management of resources, the protection of biodiversity, and the mitigation of pollution and habitat degradation.
- **Resource Efficiency:** Efficient resource use is essential for maintaining ecological integrity. This involves reducing waste, minimising resource extraction, and adopting sustainable agriculture, forestry, and fisheries practices. It encourages the development of renewable energy sources and promotes recycling and circular economy models to reduce the burden on natural systems.
- **Pollution Prevention and Remediation:** Addressing pollution is a critical aspect of ecological integrity. This includes air and water quality, soil contamination, and hazardous waste management. Sustainable practices focus on reducing emissions, treating pollutants, and remediating contaminated sites to ensure ecosystems can recover and thrive.

How will the annual awards be assessed?

It is proposed that each of the selected award schemes will be assessed on a simple points scheme. Parish councillors will be invited to visit the site and score the scheme based on the above criteria.

The score ranges would be:
1. A damaging and negative impact upon the character or environment of the area in the vicinity of the scheme
2.An adverse but not totally damaging effect upon the character or environment of the area in the vicinity of the scheme
3. Neutral effect - neither damaging nor beneficial
4.A positive but not outstanding affect upon the character or environment of the area in the vicinity of the scheme
5.A significant and substantial benefit to the character or environment of the area in the vicinity of the scheme

Councillors will assess the building by visiting and completing the score sheet based on a visual inspection. If the building can only be assessed from the rear (for example, for an extension), then permission must be granted from the landowner prior to the assessment.

Visits may be completed solo or in small groups. If a small group is attending the site, then they will score the building individually. The Clerk will compile a final averaged score. For a candidate to be considered, the Clerk will need to receive at least three score sheets, to ensure the building has been suitably assessed.

In years where only one candidate for consideration is received, the Parish Council reserve the right to not present the award, if a score of at least 3.0 is not achieved.

Selection of Candidates

Candidates for the award can be selected in one of two ways:

1. Councillors can present a candidate for consideration. Except for the inaugural award, which will be assessed in late 2026, this is usually done at the meeting preceding the Annual Parish Council Meeting (usually March).
   If a Councillor presents a candidate for consideration, then they are not permitted to visit the site to assess the candidate.

2. Developers, builders or homeowners may submit their development directly to the Clerk for consideration. Submissions will need to be received no later than March 31st, to be considered for that year's award.

Assessment visits for the inaugural award will take place in November / December 2026, with the award for 2026 given in January 2027.
For subsequent awards, assessment visits will take place in March / April, with the award given in May, at the Annual Parish Council Meeting.

Eligibility

Candidates may be considered for the below awards:
1a) Good Design - Single new buildings (residential, commercial or industrial) or extensions/adaptation of existing buildings.
1b) Good Design - Schemes for multiple buildings (residential, commercial or industrial). Typically, these would new housing or industrial/commercial schemes with a single developer
2a) Ecological - Small scale schemes relating to an area no larger than 1 hectare designed either to enhance ecological diversity or to mitigate the adverse effects of development. This could include a single property.
2b) Ecological - More extensive schemes either for distinct habitats, or for the enhancement of existing habitats (e.g. woodland, farmland) not related to a specific building. This could include a development.

A candidate may receive more than one award, provided they are eligible (e.g. a candidate could be awarded both 1a and 2a).

The Parish Council are keen to award recently completed developments, although they acknowledge that some ecological factors may need time to mature (for example, planting). The Parish Council will prioritise developments completed in the last five years, adding an additional 10% weighting to their score, if compared against older developments.

A development must be located either wholly within the Parish or within 3 miles of the Parish boundary (being a site that has a direct impact on residents) to be considered. In the case of larger developments, most of the site (i.e. 50%+) must be located within 3 miles of the Parish boundary to be considered.

A candidate may submit their development for assessment in multiple award cycles. However, once a candidate has won an award, they are ineligible to submit for the same award again, unless significant changes to the site are made. (i.e. a candidate could be awarded 1a in 2026 and apply again and be awarded 2a in 2027).

Award and recognition

Winners of any of the above awards will receive a small plaque, which can be displayed at their property / development.

Suspension or cancellation of the award

The Parish Council will not present the award if no suitable candidates are presented for consideration.

The Parish Council reserve the right to cancel or suspend the award at any time. Written confirmation of this will be given on the Parish Council website.