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Media Release

Growing hopes for Bloom prize at RUH

The courtyard gardens and glorious green spaces at the Royal United Hospital are looking blooming marvelous, thanks to the efforts of its volunteer gardeners.

A team of six dedicated Friends of the RUH, have been busy preparing the grounds for two VIP visits. Bloom judges from the Southwest regional heats arrived this week to examine their efforts. And in August another team - from the prestigious Royal Horticulture Society (RHS) - will inspect the floral displays for the national Britain in Bloom competition.

Generous donations from the Friends of the RUH, the Bath in Bloom committee, and the RUH Estates department, enabled the purchase of hundreds of plants which meant the hospital grounds were bursting with colour in time for the summer inspections.

But it's the hard work of the green-fingered Friends that ensures these standards are maintained throughout the year. The volunteer gardeners, led by husband and wife team Bernard and Jane Rymer, meet every Wednesday to work in the RUH grounds, come rain or shine.

Bernard said: "We are excited and honoured to be part of the Bloom competitions again this year. We have been working hard on the floral displays and containers around the front entrance of the RUH, and in the courtyard gardens behind the atrium.

"We all love working outside and the team are great friends. We get a lot of pleasure out of it, especially when people come up to us and say lovely things about our gardening."

Friends volunteer manager, Jane Watkins, said: "We are exceptionally lucky to have the knowledge and enthusiasm of our gardening team. In the five years they have been volunteering with us they have truly transformed the hospital grounds."

Howard Jones, Director of Estates & Facilities at RUH, said: "The Bloom competitions are a great incentive for everyone to work together to improve the appearance and environment around the hospital.

"But we know the hard work goes on all year round. The Friends volunteers, RUH staff and our contractors Glendale, do an excellent job to ensure the hospital always looks its best. We are grateful for their support and know their work is much appreciated by patients, visitors and staff."

Barry Cruse is chairman of Bath In Bloom. He escorted the judges around the hospital site this week. He said: "One of the key aspects of the Bloom competitions is the extent to which the community and volunteers are involved in the process. The creative work of the Friends in developing the courtyard gardens is a valuable example of this. There are growing hopes the hospital will pick up a prize this year."

For more information on the work of the Friends of the RUH visit their website www.friendsoftheruh.org.uk

For information about Bloom competitions go to www.rhs.org.uk and click on Britain In Bloom

Picture: L-R Friends of RUH gardeners; Christine Weston, Kathryn Eardley, Jill Lake, Jane Rymer and Bernard Rymer