

Dig In

Community Food Growing in West Lancashire

Welcome

Welcome to the second 'Dig In' newsletter - for all in West Lancashire growing, or wanting to grow, their own food on a community site. The West Lancs Community Food Growing Project aims to get more people involved in growing their own food and eating more healthily. We are working with local communities and schools to set up community food growing initiatives and providing help in finding the land (and funds) that might be needed.

West Lancs Community Food Growing and Allotment Day - 13th March

Don't forget to come to the first **Community Food Growing and Allotment Day on Saturday 13th March, 1pm-4pm in the Ecumenical Centre in Skelmersdale.**

The aim is to provide practical help and guidance to all those involved in growing or wanting to grow their own food. Key speakers will include: Allotment Regeneration Initiative, National Society of Allotment and Leisure Gardeners, West Lancashire Borough Council, West Lancashire Community Food Growing Project. Presentations will cover all aspects of setting up and improving sites as well as the Borough Council's Allotment Strategy.



There will also be exhibits from Red Apple Community Trust, Skelmersdale Horticultural Society, Groundwork Lancashire, NHS Central Lancashire, Skelmersdale Community Food Initiative, National Society of Allotment and Leisure Gardeners, Allotment Regeneration Initiative, and Lancashire Wildlife Trust. Free healthy food tasters will be served from 1pm by Skelmersdale Community Food Initiative.

Grant funding: the deadline for applying for West Lancs Community Food Growing funding is 13th March 2010. Contact us at CVS for more information.

Schools Programme

The Schools Programme has been continuing apace with Red Apple Community Trust, along with Lancashire County Council Extended Services Team and West Lancashire CVS, offering a number of raised beds to schools - fully built and supplied with soil, with a view to creating food growing After School Clubs. The interest from schools has been excellent, with the project now working with a total of eighteen schools. Red Apple has completed site surveys, undertaken the supply of timber and soil, and raised beds have now been installed in all the schools. The ownership of the project is the responsibility of each school. The first task of filling the beds with the soil provided is followed by setting up the appropriate After School Club and development of links with a Specialist Tutor. As the growing season progresses each school will have access to six hours of tutor time, plus telephone support via the staff at Red Apple Nursery. Schools can also visit Red Apple Nursery to gain an understanding of plant and food growing on a wider scale. By the summer, the hard work and determined effort of staff, parents and the children at each school will enable these new outdoor spaces to be fully used for learning, growing food and healthy eating.

For more information about this programme, contact Joanne McGrath at LCC Extended Service Team — tel: 0781-762-3290 or email: joanne.mcgrath@lancashire.gov.uk

Delphside Primary School reports on their 'Big Dig'

'Children, staff and parents worked together and moved eight tons of soil in to the raised beds in just two hours! The project was a great success and everyone is now looking forward to planting crops and watching them grow. The event finished with hot chocolate and toast. A great way to stay healthy, meet new friends and have fun!'



March 2010



West Lancs Community Food Growing Project supporting local people to grow their own food

New Community Sites

Roby Mill Local people in Roby Mill have been working hard to get a community allotment site up and running in the heart of their village. A Steering Group was formed at a Public Meeting in December and has met regularly since then to develop the group and the plans for the site.

Two work weekends have seen good progress on site clearance and

following a second public meeting on March 2nd the group now has a constitution and its first committee.



Work will begin in earnest this Spring to create up to 11 allotment plots, an orchard and wildlife area.

Skelmersdale A group of people in Skelmersdale has spent the last few months looking for a suitable site to develop into allotments.

Following a meeting with the Church of Christ in Digmoor, they are now looking at using the land behind the church for up to 8 full plots.

The group, recently constituted as Digmoor Inspired Growers Allotment Society (DIGAS), is fundraising to enable the site to be developed - with security fencing, pathways, and weed clearance being the priorities. More news on this site in the next issue.

Potato Day

Congratulations to Skelmersdale Horticultural Society on their highly successful Potato Day on 7th Feb. People travelled from as far away as Manchester and Liverpool to choose from over 100 varieties of seed potatoes. There are plans to run the event again next year. For more information, keep an eye on www.skelmersdalehorticulturalsociety.co.uk

Allotment Plans at Newburgh

Red Apple Community Trust has a 9 acre Nursery site in Newburgh and owns 18 acres of adjoining land. The aim is to develop around 100 allotments to be available from late 2010, fully serviced and managed by Red Apple Community Allotments Association. At present Red Apple is creating a list of potential allotment holders.

In the meantime, Red Apple is looking to develop an area of land within the Nursery site as a 'Communal Allotment' managed by Allotments Association. The allotment would be worked on a shared basis with all users receiving shares of foods grown. This would allow for development of working relationships, and enable new allotmenters to develop some basic skills. The space available is 0.48 acre and basic ground works will be supported by Red Apple Nursery who can also supply suitable vegetable plants in plug form through its propagating house and polytunnels.

If you are interested in registering for this communal allotment, or for an allotment on the Red Apple site later in the year, please contact Tom Canavan on 01257 463012 or email tom.canavan@redapplect.org.uk

West Lancs Community Food Growing Project is keen to hear from anyone interested in growing their own food with others in West Lancs. **Please get in touch!**

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