



Dig In

Community Food Growing in West Lancashire

Allotment sites news

GOOD NEWS!: New Allotment sites planned for Skelmersdale

Two new allotment sites are to be created in Skelmersdale, with the first likely to be available later this year. The Borough Council is providing £50,000 of its own capital funding (not Section 106) to create the new sites and the Community Food Growing Project and West Lancs Allotment Federation will work with the new ploholders to set up the allotment societies.

Site locations are currently being investigated but the Council would welcome any additional suggestions from Dig In readers. If you have any ideas, please email Steve Kent at Stephen.Kent@westlancs.gov.uk

Update on Digmaor allotment site: Susan Hudson, Chair of Digmaor Inspired Growers Allotment Society (DIGAS) says: *'DIGAS is still going through changes. Our allotment plots sit across two landlords - one of which is in the process of selling their land but despite best efforts of the council and allotment society the date of sale and its impact on our site is still unclear.*

'The upside is that the second landlord, the Borough Council, has been down to see the site and potentially offered support to clear a waste area at the far end of the site. This would increase the amount of useable land which in turn, would create additional plots.'



Grand Opening at Appley Bridge

A grant from Lancashire Environmental Fund has enabled the pathways and seating on the Meadows, Appley Bridge to be upgraded and the site (which includes Appley Bridge Allotment Society) was officially opened by the Mayor Cllr Doreen Stephenson on 14th April 2015. The Mayor chatted to some of the ploholders on her tour of the site.

The Meadows, a piece of land between the River Douglas and the canal, was gifted to the Community Association many years ago for recreational use, and Appley Bridge Allotment Society set up their small site on part of it in 2012. The flora and fauna across the Meadows is being monitored on an ongoing basis by Ben Hargreaves, a flora and fauna expert from Lancashire Wildlife Trust.



April 2015

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

West Lancashire Allotments Federation

On the last weekend of January we had our annual Potato Day, which again this year this took place in the West Square of the Concourse Shopping Centre in Skelmersdale. We managed to get good coverage in the press this year leading up to the event. This resulted in growers from all over the north west coming along to get their seed potatoes as well as lots of other seeds and plants. By now these potatoes should be doing their thing in the ground!

The Federation's Annual General Meeting was on 11th February in the West Lancs Council chambers in Ormskirk. It was certainly not as well attended as we would hope but nevertheless enough people came to make it worthwhile! The management committee remains unchanged for the coming year with Steve Kirby from Hesketh Bank in the Chair. There was word from the Borough Council that the long awaited tenancy leases are due any time now. Our guest speaker, Alan Hull, had to cancel due to illness (but we are glad to hear now that he is getting better). This allowed some of the delegates to stay behind for an informal chat about all things allotment!



Now for some good news. We are now involved in discussions with the Borough Council about new allotments. They have allocated £50,000 towards the cost of setting up possibly two new sites in Skelmersdale (see page 1)

The weather hasn't been very conducive to digging and growing so far this year, so the allotments are still looking a bit neglected. But things are beginning to look up - so it's now time to get active again!

Ray Fowler, Secretary WLAF



West Lancashire
Allotment's Federation

Know anyone looking for an allotment?

St Teresa's Allotment Society in Upholland have a couple of vacant plots. Anyone interested should contact Andrew Southworth on 01695-632721 or email andy@southworth.freeserve.co.uk



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The Eco Centre takes off !

The Eco Centre in Newburgh is now under new management with an exciting joint venture called 'Apple Cast' being formed between Cast North West and Red Apple - resulting in major new investment in the site.

This new **social enterprise will combine horticulture (through a commercial plant nursery) and fish breeding ponds (providing stock for commercial fisheries)**. The site will also incorporate the only natural indoor angling centre. These activities will provide volunteer and work opportunities for people of all ages in the region who would otherwise struggle to find a job or participate in stimulating activity.

The site will be managed by Cast North West and Site Director Neil Farnworth says *'it has been a very exciting winter for us as we have been working hard installing the fish breeding ponds and getting the commercial nursery back up and running. The site had been neglected and needed to be updated to offer activities to people of all abilities that stimulate and progress people to a better way of life. We already have 9 people employed on site and have plans to take on more as the business grows through social enterprises. We have been in contact with the local village community and we welcome their involvement in what we are trying to do here. The land to the rear will be used to keep rare breeds animals and a community farm. **We have also had talks with Newburgh Parish Council regarding community allotments and we are keen to go ahead once arrangements and access have been agreed'**.*

In addition to a wide range of plants, shrubs and bedding plants, the Centre is also **offering a variety of vegetable plug plants** - beetroot, beans, lettuce, cabbage, kale, turnip, broccoli, sprouts, herbs, peas, sweet corn, etc. for just 15p per plug. For details please contact the nursery manager Gary Strawson on gary.strawson@hotmail.co.uk or via his mobile 07939 665707.

The centre is on Cobbs Brow Lane in Newburgh, post code WN8 7SF and is open from 8am to 6pm, 6 days a week. For more details on the new site and how you might be able to help or get involved, please contact the Site Director Neil Farnworth on 07939 233723 or Horticulture Manager Gary Strawson 07939665707.



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Grow it, Eat it, Use it

– a course from the WEA (Workers Education Association)

A new course funded by the WEA has started at Quarry Bank Community House (Skelmersdale). The course is open to members of the local community but specifically organised for adults with special needs. West Lancs Community Restart have established a number of raised beds for growing vegetables for the community and a polytunnel will be in place within the next couple of weeks for growing tomatoes, peppers and cucumbers.

The course will look at growing vegetables and soft fruit, learning how to cook them and why it is important to eat healthily. We hope that there will be opportunities to link with the Skelmersdale Community Food Initiative, organic growers and local supermarkets to learn where our food comes from. We've have already had a visit from the Oral Health Promotion Officers based in Skelmersdale to explain how some foods are not so good for teeth.

The course is held every Tuesday at 10am. Quarry Bank Community House would like to encourage the local community to get involved to use the site and help is always needed for watering plants and weeding. Anyone who is interested can contact Claire at claire66hg@googlemail.com

Claire Cooper - Course Tutor



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. **We are keen to hear from anyone interested in growing their own food with others in West Lancs. Please get in touch!**

Martin Trengove
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Keep up to date at our website: <http://wlcvs.org/index.php/community-food-growing>



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