



Dig In

Community Food Growing in West Lancashire

Canal celebration raises allotment funds

Leeds Liverpool canal is celebrating it's 200 year anniversary this year, and Burscough Allotment Society enthusiastically joined in the celebrations - whilst raising some funds to improve their allotments at the same time!

The first event was Burscough Heritage Weekend 18th-19th June and the Burscough Allotment Society stall at the Wharf looked magnificent. The weather was kind and they managed to sell hundreds of pounds worth of produce, plants, and fruit bushes.



This was followed by a Heritage day on 22nd October which celebrated the date that the first boats used the canal. At this event they sold home made jams and chutneys as well as bunches of herbs.

After the success of these two events, the Allotment Society has been selling more of their produce in November - at a Christmas market at the Chapel Gallery in Ormskirk and at a Christmas fair at the Packet House pub in Burscough.



The fundraising venture was kickstarted with a grant from Burscough Parish Council which enabled them to buy pots, hanging baskets and compost, and jars and Burscough Allotment Society labels for the produce.

All the money raised will be used to improve Burscough allotments - including buying manure and soil improvers.



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STAG update and Open Day

Graham Hall, Chairman of St Teresa's Allotment Group (STAG) gives us an update:

'STAG has been going for over five years and is situated on College Road in Up Holland next to St. Teresa's Church, hence the name!



We have 38 plots which are smaller than standard but we find most people are very happy as there is still plenty of room to grow vegetables for a family. The Committee meets some six times a year and so far work undertaken includes erecting a fence around the site with two gates, planting a natural hedge along one side (to be extended round the whole site), building a large communal shed with large water collection containers around three sides to collect the rain and embarking on a scheme to drain excess water off the site in wet periods. So far so good!



We held an Open Day back in August which was welcomed by many of the members who enjoyed the opportunity to actually meet and have a good old chat! We had a small but enthusiastic group of visitors during the afternoon so this is one idea that we have already decided to repeat again next year.



If anyone wishes to find out more about our allotment, please get in touch: Tel: 01695 632 372 or Email [grahamstag1 @btinternet.com](mailto:grahamstag1@btinternet.com)



Graham Hall - STAG Chairman

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Travelling Theatre at allotments - pure genius!

During the summer the Poor Marsh Allotments in Hesketh Bank were once again delighted to welcome the Mikron Travelling Theatre to perform their latest gem of a show 'Pure', in the Community Garden on a lovely Saturday evening in June.

A best ever audience of around 150 were treated to a fabulous musical comedy performed by a truly multi talented cast of only four players as they picnicked in the evening sunshine. It was yet another memorable night and Poor Marsh have already secured a further booking of the Mighty Mikron for next year's tour.

This next show (In at the Deep End) will be held on a Friday evening on 19th May at 7.30pm and, in the event of adverse weather, a nearby indoor venue is available. A limited number of tables can be reserved a month in advance (contact Steve Kirby on 07766 367550).



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West Lancashire Allotments Federation

This year the weather beat us and unfortunately the Annual Green Fayre had to be cancelled. Weeks of preparation were wasted as non-stop rain made the show ground unusable. But a week later and with the sun shining down on Saturday July 30th, a week-long celebration of life in Skelmersdale began and all the preparations were not wasted after all.



The Evermoor community hub in Digmoor was the venue for many community groups that are active in Skelmersdale to come together to celebrate the town. Amongst those in attendance were West Lancashire Allotments Federation, Skelmersdale U3A Choir, Tawd Valley Lions, WLBC Ranger Service and Men-aces Football Club. Hundreds of people attended the event and many signed up for workshops taking place throughout the following week. These included **Allotment Open Days at St Teresa's Upholland** (featured on page two) and Skelmersdale Horticultural Society in Ashurst.

West Lancashire Allotments Federation had a stand, where Cecelia and JD Jacques led activities for children, including making paper pots and planting veggies and flowers. The Mayor, Cllr Liz Savage, attended and joined in making her own paper pot.



Date for your 2017 diary: Make sure you don't miss the **Allotment Federation's Annual Potato Day!** Come and choose your potatoes on Saturday 28th January in the Concourse Shopping Centre Skelmersdale. We will be open from 10am till 3pm. Well worth a visit to stock up on old favourites as well as choose some new varieties to trial. With over 80 varieties to choose from, plus fruit bushes and seeds, you won't be disappointed!



Ray Fowler - Secretary

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Resources

We have recently updated the Resources section on our website and it now has even more useful information for new and not-so-new Community Food Growing groups!

The resources include new fact sheets from Federation of City Farms and Community Gardens:

- [Community Growing Resource pack](#): a comprehensive introduction to setting up, developing and sustaining a community growing space.
- [Allotment law and community growing](#): general information on various legal issues concerning allotments
- [Project Allotment](#): A guide to growing together on allotments
- [Promote the Plot](#): advice for allotment associations to help you market your site and get more plotholders on plots
- [Setting up community orchards and fruit gardens](#): advice about setting up a community orchard or fruit garden.
- [Resources for school gardeners](#): useful downloads for anyone working in education and teaching who wants to use gardening as a practical part of lesson



Other resources include:

- www.growingtogether.community
A partnership initiative aiming to help community growing groups to thrive financially by finding alternatives to grant funding - including advice on income generation.
- www.communitylandadvice.org.uk
The Community Land Advisory Service (CLAS) helps communities and land managers gain satisfactory agreements on access to land by providing guidance on technical lease agreements and related issues, through hands-on help and online information resources.
- And don't forget – [A Guide for Allotments and Planning Law: Digging below the surface](#). A guide in an easily understandable format, covering all the planning issues that an allotment society might face when creating new or improving existing allotments. Commissioned by West Lancs CVS and available to download from the CVS website.

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Funding sources

Active West Lancs

A new grant pot is available locally through the Active West Lancs project. Active West Lancs is providing small grants to Associate Partner organisations to help them get people in West Lancashire more active and by so doing help to improve either their mental or physical health. Grants of up to £500 are available. More details can be found here: http://activewestlancs.org/wp/?page_id=855



Tesco 'Bags of Help'

The money raised from the 5p bag charge in Tesco stores is being used to support community participation in the development and use of open spaces. This 'Bags of Help' Scheme funds local projects that improve the environment and grants of up to £5,000 are available. It seems our region is undersubscribed so any applications will have a better than usual chance of funding.



For more information, go to: www.groundwork.org.uk/Sites/tescocommunityscheme

CVS funding sources information

We have recently updated our Funding Sources information on the website. Check it out here: www.wlcvs.org/projects/community-food-growing/#tab-id-4



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!**

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Keep up to date at our website: www.wlcvs.org/?page_id=28



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