

Dig In

Community Food Growing in West Lancashire

Fresh Air, Fresh Start - new course



The Community Food Growing project is working with the other Active West Lancs partners to widen the 'offer' for people referred by their GP (or self-referred).

One of the new programmes on offer, 'Fresh Air, Fresh Start', is being run by Burscough Community Farm (formerly Organic Veg Club). The rolling 12 week programme will consist of a half or full day training course, with access to the farm during the week for people to practise and enjoy what they have learned.

Each course will introduce a new theme and new range of skills designed to promote each person's health and broaden their knowledge - in short, to get them outdoors, fit and healthy. The courses will start in early May and it is hoped that all the courses will be accredited to ensure that they meet and address a key set of objectives.

Example courses include:

- Organic food growing techniques
- Personal wellbeing
- Keeping chickens for eggs
- Willow weaving
- Making a ceramic pot
- Wooden spoon carving
- Outdoor cooking - from field to fork
- Introduction to bee keeping
- Nature watching
- Introduction to permaculture
- Introduction to movement, Yoga and Meditation
- Cycling for transport and to a new way of life
- Nutrition
- Intentional living

Burscough Community Farm CIC (Community Interest Company) is now a 'not for profit' Social Enterprise. It aims to grow environmentally sustainable food, promote health and well-being, teach organic growing techniques and rural crafts, grow community and preserve wildlife. All of this is done on the 18 acre smallholding between Burscough and Rufford.

If you know anyone who might benefit, there's more information and referral forms on the Active West Lancs website, [here](#).



March 2017



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

West Lancs Allotments Federation

This year's **Potato Day** in January was held once again at the Concourse in Skelmersdale. This time we were located in the atrium, which probably contributed to the **most successful event in five years** - bringing in fans from across the north west, from as far as Preston, Bolton, Warrington and The Wirral.

The WLAFF **Annual General Meeting** was held in February at the Borough Council offices in Ormskirk. The election of officers resulted in a small change. Steve Kirkby from Hesketh Bank had to resign as Chair due to other commitments. Our thanks to Steve for his input. I have now reverted to my old job of Chairman and that left space for a new Secretary. So we welcome JD Jaques from St Teresa's Upholland who is taking on that task. JD can be contacted via email on wlafsec@outlook.com.

We have just attended the **AGM for the North West Counties Allotment Association** in Blackpool. They are again planning for the Southport Show. This year they have to create two allotments - one for today and one from history - to illustrate just how much allotments have changed. After the meeting there was the presentations of the **annual awards** - one of which (to my great amazement!) I received. See below...

Ray Fowler, WLAFF Chair

NW Counties Allotment Association (National Allotment Society NW) - Chairman's Award

Andrea Hallissey, NWCAA Secretary writes: *Each year our Chairman Alan Hull and the Executive Committee have the unenviable task of choosing a worthy candidate for our Chairman's Award from our many hard working NAS volunteers around the North West.*



Steve Lowe (BBC Radio Lancashire presenter) left, and Alan Hull (NWCAA Chair) right, present Ray with his well deserved award.

This year's award has been presented to Ray Fowler, Chairman West Lancs Allotment Federation. Ray has worked tirelessly for many years supporting both the Federation and the NWCAA and justly deserves this recognition.

We would like to thank Ray and his team for all their support and their continued efforts to preserve, promote and protect allotments for future generations.

Well done Ray, from all of us here at Dig In!

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It's pay as you feel at the Junk Food Cafe

A 'JUNK' Food' café has opened its doors in Skelmersdale – and diners can pay whatever wish for meals. The café situated in the Tanhouse Community Centre in Ennerdale, diverts food destined for waste and uses it to create delicious and tasty, home cooked meals, allowing customers to eat on a 'pay as you feel' basis in money, time or skills.

The project has already served up more than 200 meals to people in Skelmersdale and uses food generously donated by local supermarkets, as part of their food waste reduction programme. The project initiated by The Birchwood Centre, is supported by community volunteers, West Lancashire College, Oaks Church in Tanhouse and Tanhouse Community Enterprise. The food is generously donated by Tesco, in Burscough, Marks and Spencer, in Ormskirk and Lidl in Standish.

The Junk Food Café takes place each Wednesday from 12-2pm at the Tanhouse Community Centre, so feel free to drop in if you fancy a delicious lunch.

Thinking ahead: if you have any surplus produce from your allotment this season, it would be gratefully received (and put to good use!) at the Junk Food Cafe. If you would like further information about the Café or Birchwood Centre services please contact Stella Connell on 01695 717115.



Roby Mill allotment site safe

The last year has been a worrying time for the ploholders at Roby Mill Allotment Group (RoMCAG). The neighbouring church hall was put up for sale 18 months ago and at the same time plans were mooted to develop the allotment site into housing. We have now heard that the hall has indeed been sold (and will continue to be used as the local nursery) but that the Council has **not** allowed the development of the land. This is great news for the Allotment Group and the Roby Mill site. The site was the first set up with the Community Food Growing project way back in 2010 and is in a beautiful location in the middle of the village. There are some plots available so if anyone is interested please let us know.

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News



Local business 'All About Food' works with chilli farmers in Mozambique

Local business donates to schools: Local business All About Food is kindly donating new soil and compost to local primary schools - to top up the raised beds provided by the Community Food Growing project several years ago. They are also joining our regular sponsor, Tawd Vale Lions, in supporting the schools **Show What You Grow event** being held this year on July 12th. All About Food are sponsoring a chilli growing competition for the schools with prizes being presented on the day, along with information on how they work with farmers in Mozambique to grow the best chilli plants.



Greenslate Farm: if you are looking for a day out over Easter time, why not check out Greenslate Farm? Just over the West Lancs boundary in Orrell they are a non profit community farm with a shop selling their free range eggs, home reared pork, and organic produce from their market garden. They also have farm animals and bees, an allotment site, and activities for kids (including an Easter holiday kids club: <https://www.facebook.com/GreenslateFarm>)

Greenslate also hosts a Vintage Farmers Market 3rd Sunday every month 10am to 2pm featuring food and artisan stalls with fresh high welfare meats, organic fruit and veg, hand made crafts, exotic spices, gorgeous home baked cakes, hot drinks, vegan food and lunch is even available!

More information on the website: <http://greenslatefarm.org.uk/>

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
Debbie Shepton
Alison Wall
Claire Cooper

CVS Project Co-ordinator
CVS Community Support
CVS School Mentor
CVS School Mentor

Email: martint@wlcvs.org
Email: debbies@wlcvs.org
Email: enquiries@wlcvs.org
Email: enquiries@wlcvs.org

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



West Lancs Community Food Growing Project,
C/o West Lancs CVS, Certacs House, 10-12 Westgate,
Skelmersdale, West Lancs, WN8 8LP
Tel: 01695-733737 Email: enquiries@wlcvs.org