

Dig In

Community Food Growing in West Lancashire

Skelmersdale Kitchen Gardens



Enthusiastic gardeners have found an unusual place to grow food in Skelmersdale. Walkers Crisps has created small growing plots for use of their employees at their factory on Pimbo industrial estate. The move came 3 years ago when Iain McManus, Sustainability Manager, was looking at how to reduce waste at the Pepsico Walker factory and how to achieve the (present day) position of sending nothing to landfill.

The allotment plots were built by the team from Midstream and are known as Skelmersdale Kitchen Gardens. They use composted waste from the factory canteen and recycled water from the potato washing.

The 14 plots and a shared polytunnel have proved popular. Employees work on their plots in between shifts and often bring their families to enjoy the growing space at weekends.

One plot has been earmarked for use by a local school or community group, so if you are interested in finding out more contact Jane Pashley on 01695 567322.



Potato Day - a great success

And talking of potatoes..... congratulations to the West Lancashire Allotment Federation on their highly successful Potato Day on Saturday 2nd February. As Ray Fowler reports on page 2, people came from far and wide to choose from over 100 varieties of seed potatoes, as well as high quality fruit trees and bushes, and seeds. The event was took place in the foyer space of the Skelmersdale concourse and attracted passers-by to stop and chat about allotments and local food growing.



March 2013



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

Report from West Lancs Allotments' Federation

The Federation AGM at the end of January was well attended and I am pleased to say that Terry Lake remains as Secretary for another year. We also welcome Claire Cooper to the executive. Claire will be taking over the management of the website among a lot of other things that could be heading her way.

Just three days later we had our Potato Day at the Concourse in Skelmersdale. This proved a great success drawing visitors from as far as Liverpool, Warrington, Preston and Blackburn. I would like to thank all those willing hands who helped on the day. Special thanks to Skelmersdale Library and Walkers Pepsico for their support and the Concourse management for having us. We look forward to a repeat performance next year. (For more photos of the event, so to the Federation website gallery: www.wlaf.btck.co.uk/Gallery/2013PotatoDaySkelmersdale

Planning for the northwest counties garden at Tatton Park in July continues. The theme of our plot in the garden will be Recycling and will include a greenhouse made from 2L plastic bottles and demonstration of composting. We are still looking for helping hands and recycling ideas to include. Anyone who can help in any way; time, transport, bottles, ideas, should contact project manager Terry Lake on terry.lake@tinyworld.co.uk, he has a list of what is needed.

The weather outside is not looking promising at the moment, so fingers crossed that we get a good year and a good harvest.



Ray Fowler, Chair WLAFF



Plant some trees!

The Tree Council has announced that its Trees for Communities and Trees for Schools grant making programmes are now open for applications.

Funds are available for schools and community groups within the UK who are able to show that children under the age of 16 will be actively engaged in tree planting projects during National Tree Week 2013 (23rd November to 1st December 2013). The Tree Council can fund projects between £100 and £700 and successful applicants will receive up to 75% towards their planting costs. For example, if your project totals £700, The Tree Council would offer up to £525. The remaining 25% will need to be secured by your school or organisation.

The closing date for applications is the **30th April 2013**. See website: www.treecouncil.org.uk/grants

And new for 2013, funds are being offered for fruit tree planting by schools and community groups through the Tree Council's [Orchard Windfalls](#) fund.



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Prince's Trust team help out at the Greenhill Community Centre

The Prince's Trust Team based at West Lancashire College have been working hard to help the food growing project at the Greenhill Community Centre in Old Skelmersdale. The team, who spent a week at the community centre, managed to erect a polytunnel and raised beds for growing fruit and vegetables. The fruit and vegetables are to be used in the meals prepared by the Pit Stop Community Cafe, also based at the Community Centre.

The existing garden areas at the front of the Community Centre were also spruced up as part of the project. As well as working incredibly hard outside the Greenhill Centre, the Prince's Trust team also raised funds for plants, seeds and equipment to stock the raised beds and polytunnel. The Prince's Trust helped to complete work started by volunteers from the local community and Skelmersdale U3A.



Greenhill Centre Volunteers with the Prince's Trust Team

The gardening project would love to hear from anyone who could help out for a couple of hours a week. If you could help, please contact Donna West at the Greenhill Community Centre on 07817201305.

RHS Community Gardening: Check out the RHS's online newsletter for all those interested in community gardening. The latest Winter issue has features on Edible Britain, as well as an unlikely joint project between teenagers from a skatepark and plotholders from the adjoining allotment site:

www.rhs.org.uk/Gardening/Community-gardening/Growing-Communities

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
John Hutchison,
Clare Cooper
& Terry Lake

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Keep up to date at our website: www.wlcvs.org/index.php/services/community-gardening



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