

Dig In

Community Food Growing in West Lancashire

Show What You Grow 2019

School children from across West Lancs celebrated their growing achievements recently our annual Show What You Grow day. Over 50 children from 8 schools brought their school grown produce, homemade scarecrows and displays of their work to the celebration event organised by the Community Food Growing project and West Lancs Allotment Federation.

Mayor Gaynar Owen opened the event, and the children enjoyed explaining their gardening activities as she toured the displays. They then enthusiastically demonstrated their skills in the gardening quiz, the Grow Your Own activity books and by creating fantastic bugs, bees and butterflies out of vegetables.

In the afternoon, the children took to the stage to share their gardening club stories and then cheered on their teachers as they took part in a welly throwing competition. The day ended with prize giving and taking home a range of goodies to help their growing efforts in the year ahead.

The children were joined at the event by Ranger Anne from the Borough Council's Ranger Service who brought a display of popular educational resources she is developing for use in Tawd Valley Park - currently the focus of a major regeneration project in Skelmersdale.

The CVS is grateful to Skelmersdale based business 'All About Food' who donated a prize for the Best Display of Work. The lucky winning school was Holmeswood Methodist primary. The event was also supported by M.A Forshaw of Scarisbrick who provided the vegetables. Thanks go to West Lancashire College for use of their gym as the event venue and above all to Upholland Tawd Vale Lions for funding the event.



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

New Barnes Road allotment site to open Spring 2020

Plans are progressing to create a new allotment site in the heart of Old Skelmersdale. The site has been sold to a housebuilder and creating the new allotment site will be one of their first jobs.

The new site will consist of 12 plots of around 150 sq m - each with their own shed. There will be a water supply and a small community building with toilets.

It is hoped the site will be open for growers in Spring 2020. A preliminary waiting list is being developed and anyone living in Skelmersdale is invited to register their interest at this stage by emailing your contact details to:

paula.campbell@westlancs.gov.uk



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Appley Bridge allotments revival

Appley Bridge Allotment Society was formed in 2011 when a group of local people determined to grow their own, identified a site within The Meadows area of the village. With help from the Community Food Growing project they set up a small site of 16 plots on the banks of the canal and started growing in Spring 2012. Over the last few years however, the number of people growing there declined and the committee was finding it hard to fill vacant plots. However this year, new recruits to the committee put out a call for new members on Facebook which produced such an enthusiastic response that all the 11 available plots were quickly filled and a waiting list created overnight!

The new plotholders have lost no time in getting stuck in. Keen to learn and work together, they have held several Get Together Sundays where they all work on the site then finish with a BBQ and social time.

New Chair Elaine Roper says: 'There's been fantastic work done on each plot. We now have all ages from 5 to 75 working on our plots, sharing tools and knowledge. We are especially pleased at the number of families who have joined. Together we are teaching the children where their food comes from and how to grow it - a very useful skill for the future!'



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Spotlight on..... Poor Marsh allotments, Hesketh Bank

Judge JD has found the Plot!

The organisers of the Love Hesketh Bank campaign were delighted when Johndaniel Jacques, Secretary of the West Lancashire Allotment Federation, agreed to judge the Best Kept Plot at The Poor Marsh Allotments. The competition was devised as part of their plans for Hesketh Bank to compete in Lancashire's Best Kept Village Competition.

Johndaniel had an enjoyable wander around the site on a beautiful evening trying to choose the best of thirteen shortlisted allotments (out of just over 60) and after much deliberation chose Plot 37, belonging to Sue and Fred Smith. Commenting on the site he said:



The winning plot

"It was a real pleasure to be shown around your wonderful allotment site. As we arrived some children were taking photos of the butterflies in your peace garden, which was in full bloom. The sense of community you have is excellent with a number of plot holders chatting to each other and saying hello as we passed by."

"And on to the best plot: the winning plot was full of wonderful produce. As I walked in I could see it was very well cared for, and it had a great mix of lovely plants, and there was a wonderful scent from some of the flowers too. It had a wonderful overall feel to it. It's clear that your members invest a lot of time and effort into their plots and the site and it's a credit to Hesketh Bank to have such a wonderful community facility."

Beautiful new Peace Garden created

Last year a couple of Hesketh Bank allotmenters, David Baines (right) and Geoff Warminger (left), created Peace Garden at the front of the site on Shore Road, Hesketh Bank and it was planted up and maintained with the help of more volunteers.

This summer it has bloomed into a lovely relaxing space where visitors can sit and enjoy all the beautiful flowers which are also attracting lots of wildlife, especially the bees and butterflies.



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Mikron Show

On the evening of Saturday 25th May, the Mikron Travelling Theatre Company returned to the Poor Marsh Allotments, Hesketh Bank for the seventh year on the trot with their hilarious performance 'Redcoats'. The play charted the eighty year history of Butlins with Mikron's trademark combination of wonderful stagecraft and brilliant songs and music in what was a hugely entertaining evening.

If you haven't yet enjoyed one of these outdoor shows with a picnic in the beautiful Community Garden, you're missing a real treat. The good news is that they will be back next year around the same time. They are also coming back this year to Hesketh Bank Community Centre on Friday 20th September to perform their other show, "All Hands on Deck" which from recent reviews is an absolute hoot. Check out their [website](#) for tour details and show trailers.



Allotment Show and Family Fun Day

Everyone is invited to this year's Annual Allotment Show and Family Fun Day which will be held on Saturday 31st August starting at 1pm. There will be lots of stands and attractions as well as the usual barbecue, cakes and other refreshments together with a selection of Poor Marsh Produce including fruit, vegetables, pot plants, preserves and honey.

As soon as the judging is over the fun begins for the kids with a variety of fun competitions including High Jump, Tug o War, Relay Race, Welly Throwing, Wheelbarrow Race, Three legged Race and more. Why not take advantage of this free fun day for all the family!

You're welcome....

If you can't make it to the Show, why not pay a visit and enjoy a wander around the site and a picnic in the Community Garden? Or if you have never been to the site and would like to view a recent drone video of the allotments go to <https://youtu.be/t4EsWb7WhKA>



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West Lancashire Allotments Federation

JD Jacques, Secretary of West Lancs Allotments Federation reports:

Radio Lancashire

"I was delighted to be invited along to appear on Stephen Lowe's Lancashire Outdoors radio show a few months ago. It was an allotment special and we discussed what it was like having an allotment, gave tips for beginners and thanked the Concourse Shopping Centre and Brighter Blooms Nursery for their support for our recent successful Potato Day.

"It was a great experience and we hope to do more with BBC Radio Lancashire in the future.

Green Fayre

"The West Lancashire Allotment Federation once again attended the fantastic and free Green Fayre. We had a range of information about allotments, got children planting seeds in pots made from newspaper, and gave out various recipes. People were impressed with the knitted vegetables we had on display, but were even more delighted to see some fantastic produce picked from local allotments (pictured right). Hopefully we inspired a few young gardeners!

"The Federation would like to thank those who visited our stall and those who helped us out on the day. We were only able to attend on the Saturday due to a lack of volunteers, so if anyone is able to help us with future events, even for an hour, please drop an email through to wlafsecretary@outlook.com



L-R: JD Jaques - WLAf, Stephen Lowe - BBC Radio Lancashire, Andy Percival - Blackpool Allotment Federation



West Lancashire Allotment's Federation

wlafsecretary@outlook.com

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Coming up.....



**HOUGHTONS ROAD & TAWD VALLEY
ALLOTMENTS OPEN DAY**

NEXT TO COBBS BROW SCHOOL, MANFIELD, ASHURST
SKELMERSDALE WN8 6SU

SATURDAY 17TH AUGUST 10am-1pm

EVERYONE WELCOME!

FREE TEA, COFFEE, CAKES, BISCUITS
GUIDED TOURS & GARDENING TIPS
HOME-GROWN FRUIT & VEG AVAILABLE FOR A SMALL DONATION

COME AND SEE HOW EASY IT IS TO GROW YOUR OWN!



Big Soup Share

Join the RHS's **Big Soup Share** to celebrate your harvest and share it with friends and neighbours.

The Big Soup Share will take place across the country between **7th -13th October 2019** and is open to any schools, youth groups or community groups. If you register to take part, the RHS will send you a printed resource pack in September to help make your event a soup-er success! Or you can download invitations, booklets, bunting, labels, posters and more at: <https://schoolgardening.rhs.org.uk/Competitions/Big-Soup-Share>



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Volunteer at the Junk Food Garden

It's official - volunteering is good for you! A study conducted by NCVO shows volunteering can have a [positive effect on your health](#). And if your volunteering is with a food growing group, you have the added bonus of hitting all [Five Ways to Wellbeing](#): **Connect** (to nature and each other), **Be active**, **Take notice** (of the world around you), **Keep learning**, and **Give**.

If you're interested in improving your health by getting involved in a local growing project, the new Birchwood Junk Food Garden is looking for volunteers and would love to hear from you. The successful Birchwood Junk Food Café project runs community cafes in various locations across Skelmersdale, serving up delicious food made from food surpluses collected from major retailers - all on a pay as you feel basis.

This year the Junk Food café is looking at growing food locally to supply the café as well. Work has started on creating a Junk Food Garden behind the Ecumenical Centre. Later this month 12 young people from the National Citizenship Service will get stuck in to continue the good work already done by various groups including Community Payback, and the Co-operative Bank (pictured right).

If you are interested in volunteering to help grow food with this amazing project, contact Debbie on 01695-733737 or debbies@wlcvs.org.



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!**

Debbie Shepton
Alison Wall
Claire Cooper

CVS Community Support
CVS School Mentor
CVS School Mentor

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

Keep up to date at our website: www.wlcvs.org/projects/community-food-growing/



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