



Dig In

Community Food Growing in West Lancashire

Welcome

Welcome to the third 'Dig In' newsletter - for all in West Lancashire growing, or wanting to grow, their own food on a community site. 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.

West Lancs Community Food Growing and Allotment Day - 13th March

Over 70 people came to the first Community Food Growing and Allotment Day on Saturday 13th March and enjoyed a wide range of exhibits and inspiring speakers. A major theme of the day was the importance of local people forming their own societies to take control of their allotment sites. Steve Kent the WLBC Officer attending indicated that the Council is willing for groups to work towards this end and recognised that local society-run allotments are the best and most effectively managed.

Speakers from the Allotment Regeneration Initiative and National Society of Allotments and Leisure Gardeners gave a picture of what's happening nationally and provided an outline of the wide ranging services they can provide in helping food growing groups. The websites of both organisations provide a wealth of information resources:

Allotment Regeneration Initiative (ARI):

www.farmgarden.org.uk/ari

National Society of Allotment & Leisure Gardeners: www.nsalg.org.uk

And local representatives can be contacted with any issues or queries:

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Community Food Growing grants awarded

Congratulations to the local groups who were recently awarded grants from the West Lancs Community Food Growing small grants fund. A total of £10,134 will be shared by six local food growing groups to help them in setting up new food growing projects or to encourage greater community participation and productivity on existing sites. The successful groups were:

- **Dig A Little More**, Little Digmoor Skelmersdale: Supply and Fitting of External Tap plus purchase of Organic Compost
- **Making Space** Plot at Red Apple, Newburgh: Purchase of 20ft by 8ft Glass Greenhouse
- **Skelmersdale Horticultural Society**: Remineralising the Houghton Rd Allotment site
- **Digmoor Inspired Growers Allotment Society**: Preparing Growing Areas, Wind Breaks, Insurance, Laying Water Pipe, and Hard Standing
- **Hesketh with Beckonsall Parish Council**: Laying of pathways and tilling and marking out plots
- **Roby Mill Community Allotment Group**: Securing site boundary and preparing land for planting

A further round of CFG small grant funding is expected in Spring 2011.



May 2010

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

New Community Sites

The groups at Roby Mill and Digmoor (Skelmersdale) are continuing to develop their sites. The site at Roby Mill has already been prepared for planting. However, the Digmoor site is having to go through a 'change of use' planning application which is delaying progress. Over the next few months, the CFG project will be working with local groups in Hesketh Bank, Burscough, and Ormskirk to get new sites up and running and help revamp existing ones.

Resources News

Myerscough College in Preston is running a series of short courses, including several of interest to food growers:

- **Allotments - Get the Most From Your Plot:** One day course on Sat 8th May. Cost £32
- **Grow Your Own Fruit and Vegetables:** One day course on Sat 2nd Oct. Cost £38
- **Organic Gardening:** Evening course for 5 weeks starts Wed 5th May or Wed 3rd Nov. Cost £68

For more info, go to www.myerscough.ac.uk/?page=short-course-leisure-information&subject=HORT

(Thanks to Steve at Skelmersdale Horticultural Society for the information)

Schools Programme

There are not too many Easter holidays without a drop of rain, and this last one proved a challenge to schools growing their own veg seeds for the first time. Lots of the schools had sown radishes, carrots, beetroot, peas, beans, onions, shallots and potatoes in their new raised beds before the holiday, and keeping them watered over school holidays called for mixed measures. In some cases, trays of seedlings have been taken home and lovingly tended. In other places, school caretakers have been roped into emergency gardening duties... any help has been welcomed. And, although there have been some slow down and failures, all in all the growing goes on.



Nevertheless seeds and plants tend not to organise their growing around a once a week gardening club, so the challenge for the schools is to ensure the beds get the attention they need on a regular basis - in a way that becomes part and parcel of the whole school's learning. This will probably mean the involvement of parents, grandparents and friends to step in through the week and help the children do enough to keep the garden growing, even when the times are dry!

An open day for all the schools is planned towards the end of the summer term which should be a great occasion for all to display their harvest and present their food growing stories.

West Lancashire Community Food Growing Project is keen to hear from anyone interested in growing their own food with others in West Lancs. Please get in touch!

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