



Dig In

Community Food Growing in West Lancashire

West Lancashire Allotments Federation

A new body has recently been formed to give a stronger voice on local allotment issues. By bringing together representatives from every allotment site in the borough, the West Lancashire Allotments Federation aims to promote allotments by helping to create new sites and safeguarding existing ones. As a local branch of the National Society of Allotment and Leisure Gardeners, the Federation is working in partnership with the Community Food Growing Project and with the Borough Council, to encourage allotment holders across West Lancashire to join forces on issues that affect them all.

All allotment sites are being encouraged to send reps to the Federation to ensure the new body is representative and effective. Advantages of being a part of West Lancashire Allotments Federation include:

- Expert advice and guidance, including legal matters.
- Quality seeds and plants at well below high street prices.
- A stronger voice on local issues.
- Help with funding for special projects.
- Specialist Public Liability insurance for your site



**West Lancashire
Allotments Federation**

If you are not yet a part of the Federation or would like to find out more, please contact:

- | | | |
|-------------------------|-------------------|---|
| • Terry Lake, Secretary | Tel: 01695 724862 | Email: terry.lake@tinyworld.co.uk |
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Plans for the year ahead

At the end of its first year of operation, the Community Food Growing Project has been reviewing the work done so far and looking at plans for the year ahead. Key goals for this coming year including:

- Develop at least another 50 plots in the borough
- Continue to provide mentoring support for 5 schools and (if funding is found) install raised beds in a further 10 schools
- Run another Allotments Day in conjunction with the new Federation.
- Distribute a further £10,000 of Community Food Growing grants to new and existing allotment groups
- Target the creation of a new large allotment site in the Skelmersdale area
- Work with allotment holders on existing Council sites to support the self management, if wanted.
- Continue to develop the Network, publish quarterly Dig In Newsletter and promote local horticultural training courses

Diary dates

Potato Day: following the success of last year's event, Skelmersdale Horticultural Society are planning another Potato Day on Sunday 6th Feb 10am—3pm at Woodley Park Centre, WN8 6UQ. With over 100 different varieties of potato available (as well as seeds, onion sets, garlic and plants) this beats anything you can find in the shops!

• Take a break from digging and put your Autumn time to good use! Two useful courses have been organised by the CFG Project on **Plant and Soil Health** and on **Composting**. Monday **November 22nd** at Dignumoor Community Centre in Skelmersdale. See www.wlcvs.org/training.html or contact Greg Swift at CVS on 01695 733737 for details.



November 2010

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

Happy Harvesters

The Schools' Food growing project has now been written up in a full report which is well worth a read! The origins, delivery and outcomes of the scheme in 18 primary schools are detailed, along with the full results of evaluation questionnaires sent to all schools. This feedback from the schools reveals the hugely positive impact that the project has had on participating children and staff, parents and the wider community. Schools themselves have invested both time and cash into sustaining the project and the spinoffs have included new cookery clubs, lots of links into other parts of the curriculum and a range of competitions entered (and awards won!).

Nearly all the schools estimated that 20-30 children had eaten a different fruit or vegetable for the first time and there was a confidence that all the children involved had consumed more fruit and vegetables as a result of participating in the project. A further question reveals that children have taken the growing 'bug' home with them and families are harvesting their own fruit and veg at home for the first time.

The scheme is perhaps best summed up by one of the teachers as:
"....a great practical education and life skill resource". The report can be viewed at www.wlcvs.org/services/community-gardening.html



Cobbs Brow gardening club show off their squash and marrows

Updates on community sites

St Teresa's, Upholland: Local residents have started planning the exciting development of a new allotment site beside St Teresa's Church, Upholland. Over 50 people attended a public meeting on September 16th, with 25 of them volunteering to form a Steering Group to push the project forward. The group is now working hard on issues such as site layout, membership, forming an allotment society, planning permission, leases and grant funding - with a view to being able to start digging in March!

Tower Hill, Ormskirk: A ballot in July (on whether the site should become self-managing) did not get the required 50% of plotholders in favour of this move. Interested plotholders have therefore decided to form an Allotment Society for the site but with only limited responsibilities. The Society will act as a networking tool for plotholders, look at issues of joint purchasing of tools and equipment, joint working initiatives, plotholder support, social activities, insurance etc. The main site management responsibilities (waiting lists, plot allocation, scrutiny, and payments) will remain with the Council.

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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