

Community Food Growing in West Lancashire



Holmeswood girl scoops prize

Congratulations to Jessica Smith of Holmeswood Methodist School who has won the coveted title of 'Morrisons Young Gardener of the Year 2014' for her innovative school garden design. According to the judges, the design by Year 5 pupil Jessica 'captured all that we were looking for and more'.

As a prize, the school received 40,000 Morrisons Let's Grow vouchers and a visit from Blue Peter gardener Chris Collins. Ten lucky pupils were also invited to appear on Blue Peter, the live show, on Thursday 8th May.



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Get connected in the Diggin Forum

Want to find out what's happening in the West Lancs allotment world?
Get in touch with people on other sites? Keep up to date with local events?

A new website is being developed by West Lancs CVS which aims to connect local people, groups and businesses. 'Community-i' includes many useful features such as an Events Guide, jobs search, classified ads, vouchers for local businesses and a community network. This latter feature enables people to network with each other on a local safer online network. It's a free and fun way to keep in touch with what's happening—on your own allotment site and on others.



It's easy to use— you just join up as a member then create your own group or join an existing one.

We have set up one called the 'Diggin' Forum' which we hope will be useful in connecting allotmenters together and exchanging information of interest.

Go to www.communityiwestlancs.org and join today!



Schools Show What You Grow Day

Following the success of last year's 'Show What You Grow' Day, the Community Food Growing project is inviting green fingered school children from all over West Lancashire to come and celebrate their growing achievements on July 16th.

Last year over 60 children from 9 schools brought scarecrows and displays of drawings, paintings, photos, and poems of their gardening work to the event.

Working with West Lancashire College and funded by Tawd Vale Lions, the Community Food Growing Project hopes that even more children will be able to attend this fun day.

If you know any schools who would be interested in taking part, please contact: Rachel on 01695-733737 or email rachelwheble@aol.co.uk

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Garden Republic

Following the success of BBC2's The Big Allotment Challenge, a new primetime gardening series with a working title 'Garden Republic' is being developed. The series will follow a group of neighbouring **home-owners** who will each expand their individual gardens by banishing fences to allow for one large community garden, to be shared by all the neighbours.

The home-owners will be guided, helped and mentored by one of Britain's biggest gardening names, working together to decide what their perfect garden will include – from creating a stunning rose garden, to tending chickens, growing a fruit orchard, or constructing a giant children's play area.

The producers are looking for a group of neighbours (with individual back gardens) to take part in the series. For more information call Vicki or Felicity on 02079073470 or email: communalgarden@silverriver.tv
Twitter: @onedreamgarden
Web: <https://www.facebook.com/pages/Communal-Garden-TV-Project/1418750528389480> -



West Lancashire Allotments Federation

In April we attended the North West Region AGM at Croxteth Hall Liverpool. It is looking very likely that the NWR Chair, Andy Percival, will soon be installed as Chair of National Allotment Society. This should be confirmed in June when the NAS will be holding their AGM at Blackpool. WLAF will attend and would like to thank all those member/societies who have given us their proxy votes this year.

WLAF will be at the Green Fayre on Beacon Park in July. We are hoping to put on a small display of plants in pots to show people what can be done at home while waiting on the lists for an allotment plot. If you have a pot or two that we can use we would like to hear from you! We have a meeting planned for this on 11th June, 7.30 at the Ring O'Bells Lathom. Please come along, tell us what you have and we'll arrange to collect. We already have a few promised pots, including an oak tree.

Congratulations to Matthew Smith for obtaining a Silver-Gilt award at his first Chelsea Flower Show for his display of Zantedeschia (right). Matthew is our supplier for the potato days.

The growing season is now well on it's way with the usual crop of weeds trying to take over. Don't let 'em get to you!

Ray Fowler - Secretary



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The Government response to the recent e-petition Tell Eric Pickles that allotments must not be sold off

In responding to a recent e-petition - 'Tell Eric Pickles that allotments must not be sold off!' - the Government has restated its support of allotments and increased provision:

'An e-petition has been suggesting that the Department for Communities and Local Government is examining plans to remove council duties to provide allotments. This is completely untrue and has no basis in fact. In 2011, the Government compiled a list of statutory duties that councils must follow, but Ministers made very clear to Parliament there were no plans to change any of the duties on allotments (www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201011/cmhansrd/cm110524/text/110524w0008.htm#1105257001663). This remains the case. Local authorities continue to have a specific responsibility for the management and provision of allotments in their area, ensuring those who want to start an allotment can do so. There are no plans to change this, and the e-petition's claims are simply false.

'In January 2014, the Department published Allotment Disposal Guidance: Safeguards and alternatives (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/allotment-disposal-guidance-safeguards-and-alternatives>), replacing the previous guidance from 2002. The new guidance strengthens allotment protection, as the requirement for waiting lists to be taken into account must now be rigorously applied to all that council's waiting lists, not just the waiting list for the site to be disposed of. This aims to ensure that poorly maintained sites are not used to justify disposal.

'The Government has introduced a range of measures to help communities who want land to grow fruit and vegetables. Through new community rights, local residents have increased opportunities to protect existing allotments from development and increase provision of green spaces. For example, in Thame Oxfordshire, their new neighbourhood plan will create an additional hectare of allotment land. Allotments have also been listed as assets of community value.

*As part of our commitment to supporting local community groups, the Department has also published a **best practice guide for community groups** wanting to find land to grow fruit and vegetables (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/space-for-food-growing-a-guide>) and an additional guide on **establishing community orchards and other spaces for food growing** (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/community-orchards-a-how-to-guide>).'*



Diary Dates

- **Spice up your life!: Sat 14th June** See back page for details
- **Hesketh Bank Allotments Veg Show & Fun Day: Sat 30th August 2.30pm onwards** Featuring fruit and veg display/competition for ploholders as well as veg inspired games such as Rhubarb Relay and Toss a Turnip, veg sale, BBQ and tea & cakes



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Spice Up Your Life

Skelmersdale Community Food Initiative (SCFI), who have been working in Skelmersdale for over 10 years have joined forces with a new group called **Food for Health – Skelmersdale (FFHS)** to host a series of fun and educational events on the 'use spices for health' theme.

The pilot 'Spice up your life!' event was held on April 12th at the Ashurst Community Centre. 30 people enjoyed a range of activities including a team game to identify up to 26 different spices, a talk from local ayurvedic cooking expert Peter Brown on how to use spices to make tasty meals that bring health benefits, demos from SCFI experts Emma Ross and Denise Shah on how to cook an easy, quick and tasty spice meal with chick peas and tomatoes and how to make a healthy ginger and pineapple aperitif.

The event finished with an enjoyable sit-down tasty and healthy spice meal cooked by local chefs Goran Kovacevik and William Gilmour. The menu included spicy chick peas, vegetable pilau rice, yoghurt and cucumber raita, plus a delicious home made semolina sweet for dessert! Everything was organic and freshly cooked! Everyone left with a pack of information including recipes, a sample spice mix and some bay leaves and - if they had been good enough to complete the feedback sheet – a free pack of couscous! Feedback was great, so the event is being refined and repeated.

The next event is coming at Tanhouse Community Centre, Ennerdale on Sat 14th June. Starts 11 am with registration, finishes at 2 pm after lunch. 30 places only.

Tickets are £2.50 per head (includes lunch and info pack) available from: Skelmersdale SCFI on 01695 720555, Food for Health – Skelmersdale on 01695 50992, or Tanhouse Community Centre, or the Ecumenical Centre in Skelmersdale.

Websites: www.scfi.org.uk

<http://foodforhealthskelmersdale.org>



LEARN TASTE WATCH EAT

Includes free meal, spice mix and info pack

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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Keep up to date at our website: <http://wlcvs.org/index.php/community-food-growing>



West Lancashire Council for
Voluntary Service



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