

# Dig In

Community Food Growing in West Lancashire

## Introducing the Organic Veg Club - a new way of local growing

A new and innovative food growing project has been launched to get local people pooling resources to grow fruit and vegetables. The new project called Organic Veg Club has been set up by Neil and Jane Hickson, who are looking at ways of producing food that are future proof and rooted in the local community—on their prime agricultural land between Burscough and Rufford.

A Steering Group, recruited from a public meeting in November, has been working to get the project up and running. Progress has been swift, with the enthusiastic founding group already laying hedges, sowing seeds and planting fruit bushes and trees to start the forest garden.

The Organic Veg Club is being modelled on Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) schemes popular in Europe and the U.S. There are currently about 100 CSAs set up in Britain, but this will be the first in West Lancashire. It works by people buying a 'share' in the crop in the form of a weekly fee and/or a small contribution of labour. In return they get a weekly supply of vegetables and fruit.

Jane and Neil's motivation is similar to many allotmenters and food growers across West Lancashire. Jane says, 'As parents of two young daughters, we have become increasingly concerned about where our food comes from - especially how far it needs to be transported and the chemicals involved in growing it'. Neil agrees, 'The project has been prompted by the growing realisation that future fuel is going to be in much shorter supply - both for growing and transportation of food. By producing our food locally, we cut down on transport costs, and by using sustainable methods, such as organic growing, permaculture and forest gardening, we hope to dramatically reduce the amount of fuel that would be needed in growing it.'



Their highly informative website has lots of further information and pictures: [www.organicvegclub.co.uk](http://www.organicvegclub.co.uk).  
Twitter: @organicvegclub  
Facebook: [www.facebook.com/organicvegclub](https://www.facebook.com/organicvegclub)



>> Edge Hill University allotment looking for local growers >>



March 2014



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

## Edge Hill University allotment looking for local growers

Last year, Edge Hill Students' Union with the support from the University, developed an allotment in the grounds of its University site in Ormskirk. The aim of the allotment is for students, staff and members of the community to come together to grow, eat and share organic, nutritious, fresh, local, low carbon and most importantly delicious food.

Edge Hill Students' Union is looking for volunteers from the community to get involved with the project. Could you help the student and staff volunteers by providing some expertise on how to grow fruit and veg and help them manage the site? Or are you looking for food growing space and would like to join those working the allotment? If so, would you like to become involved in the project?

To find out how you could become involved in this exciting allotment project, contact Jess Martin at the Students' Union by email [martinj@edgehill.ac.uk](mailto:martinj@edgehill.ac.uk) or call 01695-657301



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## West Lancashire Allotments Federation

The Annual General Meeting of the Allotments Federation took place at the end of January. Our secretary for the last four years, Terry Lake, retired and this resulted in a small shuffle of officers. I have taken over the job of Secretary and the position of Chairman has passed to Steve Kirby from Hesketh Bank. Steve is very knowledgeable in allotment affairs and will be a great asset to the Federation. We are sorry to see Terry go, and would like to thank him for his unwavering enthusiasm and dedication in helping to establish and develop the Federation since its inception 4 years ago.

Our second annual Potato Day was held at The Concourse Shopping Centre in Skelmersdale on 1st February. This year we were on the first floor in West Square. With potato enthusiasts coming from all over the northwest it turned out to be an even greater success than last years event. (It may appear from looking at the picture below that we were under water but no, this is just a mural and not the result of the flooding that is all around us). Thanks to the Concourse management for their assistance, Skelmersdale U3A and Skelmersdale Libraries for their support. And a special thanks to all our customers—hope to see you again next year!

Ray Fowler,  
Secretary



West Lancashire Allotment's Federation



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## Help needed for new allotment project At West Lancashire College

A group of learners with learning difficulties and disabilities at West Lancashire College is creating an allotment on the college premises. So far the group headed by tutor Jade Greenhalgh, has planted 9 fruit trees, built 6 raised beds and a pathway through to the orchard. They are also planning on making a sensory area for blind and severely disabled learners including lots of herbs like lavender and rosemary.

Jade says, 'This is a wonderful opportunity for our learners and we would love to enlist the help of the community food growing community in West Lancs. We are doing this completely independently through fundraising and donations and need all the help we can get!'

The group are hoping to fully establish the allotment by this summer. At present they need help with:

- Materials to create a shelter and storage for equipment
- Guest speakers to come in and help educate the learners with any aspects of allotment growing
- Any donations of funding, plants, seeds, tools or useful materials.

If anyone can help with this project, please get in touch with Jade on 01695-52353 or email:

[jade.greenhalgh@westlancs.ac.uk](mailto:jade.greenhalgh@westlancs.ac.uk)



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**  
**Clare Cooper**  
**& Terry Lake**

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Phone us on:

**01695 733737**

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



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