



Dig In

Community Food Growing in West Lancashire

Progress aplenty on Community Sites

Hesketh Bank Allotments and Leisure Growers Association: The first 17 plots were allocated by mid June last year and ploholders even managed to show off their first produce at the Hesketh Bank Village Show in September! Early in the new year the site was redrained and provision made for a later supply of water and electricity. The remaining 40 plots were all marked out and allocated by April and there is already a waiting list of about 15. A first raised bed has been built for one resident with impaired mobility and more will be provided, subject to funding.



The Allotments Committee of Hesketh with Beconsall Parish Council is currently working towards the development of the next phase of the plans for the site - the establishment of a Permaculture Project on a third of an acre set aside within the allotment site. A Steering Group has been set up to consider what features and activities this Project might include. Some Section 106 monies, together with Parish Council funding, is enabling provision of a refurbished and extended car park, a roadway to the planned Permaculture entrance, a water connection to the recently provided standpipes, and some landscaping and tree planting work. Work on the car park was completed in July (and celebrated with a barbeque on the "Green" - a triangle of land set aside for communal gatherings and activities!) For more info, go to www.heskethbankallotments.co.uk

Burscough Allotment Society: With support from Burscough Parish Council, West Lancashire Allotment Federation and WLCVS, existing ploholders and those on the allotment waiting list have formed the Burscough Allotment Society. Although it is early days, the group have set out to both improve the existing allotments at Richmond Avenue and to search for suitable land to provide more allotments. There are currently 56 people on the waiting list! Richmond Avenue allotment holders will be meeting to draw up a 'wish list' of improvements they would like, and possible funding sources will be explored. They say improvements to the fencing are likely to be No 1 on the list (see photo). There are also problems with overhanging trees.

Anyone interested in joining Burscough Allotment Society should contact the Chair, Chris Williams
(christine@cwilliams2.orangehome.co.uk)



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St Teresa's Allotment Group

Following a public meeting last September, the steering group of St Teresa's Allotment Group (STAG) in Upholland worked with the Community Food Growing Project through the winter to establish their group and plan development of their site. STAG was officially formed, and the first committee elected, at a General Meeting in February. All of the 36 plots (each just over one-third of a standard allotment plot) were allocated and plotholders started digging and planting at the end of March. A further two plots have also been allocated to the Nugent Care Society for use by their clients.

St Teresa's Church, which initiated the project, has continued its support by providing temporary car parking and pedestrian access to the site. STAG is submitting a planning application for an on-site car park in the Autumn and the Archdiocesan architect has given the go-ahead for harvesting rainwater for the site from the church roof.

Enthusiasm for the project remains high, and many plotholders have found unexpected benefits: *'It's not just a matter of food growing'* said one committee member, *'it's the community spirit that evolves, looking out for your neighbour. That's what it's all about—a brilliant community project'*



Owens Avenue

After taking on the derelict allotments, the enthusiastic group of new plotholders at Owens Avenue in Ormskirk have transformed the site. All the plots are up and running, a tool shed has been put up and the site has been further enhanced by the arrival of ducks, chickens and quail to occupy a secure pen made by one of the plotholders. One committee member commented on the transformation: *'It's looking fab—like a dream come true..'*



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Digmoor Inspired Growers Allotment Society

Chair Susan Hudson reports: 'The site has moved on dramatically from wasteland to a productive allotment site, with all available plots taken and a slowly growing waiting list. Crops are now being harvested - instead of bikes and tyres being dumped..

'Further development of the site is planned to introduce community raised beds to allow

more members to join and get a taste of 'allotmenteeering'. A successful grant application to Small Sparks has now provided us a secure container.

'We have plans to set aside a small area next to the container for a shared outdoor meeting area with seating and space for a BBQ'.



Other News

West Lancashire Allotment Federation supported the successful Green Fayre at Beacon Country Park on July 23rd and 24th.

As well as spreading the word about the Federation, they made £73 to support Federation work with a veg tombola and a lot of families went home with fresh veg!



A lot of bottle...

Dalton St. Michael's Primary School are taking recycling to a new level by constructing a greenhouse made from plastic bottles! Over 1,500 bottles were collected to create the new greenhouse, which is proving a useful asset to the gardening club and involved teachers, parents and pupils in the making.

To find out more contact Terry Lake, email: terry.lake@tinyworld.co.uk

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Unsure about Planning Issues?

With planning law often unclear when it comes to allotments, and open to different interpretation by local councils, the Community Food Growing Project has commissioned a planning consultant to research and highlight the main planning requirements relating to allotments in West Lancs. The resulting document provides a very thorough and useful guide to planning law as it relates to sites locally, and shows for example, how requirements differ between sites that are council owned and privately owned. Download your copy from our website at: www.wlcvs.org/services/community-gardening.html



Council for Voluntary Service
West Lancashire

A Guide for Allotments and Planning Law

Digging below the surface



March 2011

Award winning project

An award has been presented in recognition of the work done by the West Lancs Community Food Growing Project and the lead taken by Gulab Singh MBE from NHS Central Lancashire in providing funds to make it possible. Alan Hull, chair of North West branch of the National Society of Allotment and Leisure Growers presented Gulab with the award at a recent visit to St Teresa's Allotment Society, in recognition of his efforts in promoting and supporting community food growing in Central Lancashire.



Alan Hull, NSLAG presenting award to **Gulab Singh MBE**, Assistant Director Healthy Communities, accompanied by (left to right) **Jenny Ashburner** (Public Health Associate Healthy Communities, NHS Central Lancashire), **Martin Trengove**, **Debbie Shepton**, **Greg Mitten**, **John Hutchison** (all Community Food Growing Project, West Lancs CVS)

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
John Hutchison
Debbie Shepton

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West Lancashire Council for
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