

# Dig In

Community Food Growing in West Lancashire

## West Lancs Schools Celebrate Growing Success



The Community Food Growing Project has worked with 25 West Lancashire primary schools over the last 3 years to encourage food growing. To celebrate their achievements and to mark the end of the School Support Project the schools were invited to a 'Show What You Grow' festival on 4th July at West Lancashire College.

Over 60 children from 9 of the schools attended, bringing scarecrows and displays of drawings, paintings, photos, and poems of their gardening work. The Mayor and Mayoress of West Lancashire opened the day and the children enthusiastically gave them a tour of their work. They then took part in competitions such as 'Make a Veggie' face, and participated in a Taster Test of 6 veggie meals cooked by college students using recipes from Skelmersdale Community Food Initiative (SCFI). They also enjoyed a talk given by SCFI on 'Rocks for Lunch' describing the importance of minerals in your diet. After a healthy veggie lunch prepared by the college, the children took to the stage to give presentations about their gardening clubs and the day ended with prize giving.

The event was organised by the Community Food Growing Project with West Lancs Allotment Federation, Skelmersdale Community Food Initiative and West Lancashire College.



October 2013



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

## Community Sites Update

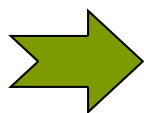
Since 2010, the Community Food Project has helped to set up 6 allotment sites. As the project is now shifting its focus to encouraging more people to not only grow but also to eat more fresh fruit and vegetables, we revisit the new sites to see how they are faring...



### Roby Mill Community Allotment Group

Established in March 2010, Roby Mill was the first site that the CFG project helped to set up and is still going strong! A picturesque setting in the middle of the village, the site is leased from the Methodist Church and houses 11 plots.

The group have a communal shed for tool storage and although there is no mains water, they secured permission from the Methodist Church to use the water run-off from the church hall roof. A system was rigged up last year to capture the run-off and is working well.



Roby Mill





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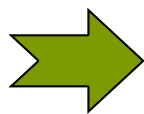
## Hesketh Bank Allotment and Leisure Growers Association

HBALG was set up in June 2010 by the Parish Council. There are now 64 plots and 17 people on the waiting list. The local scout group has a plot rent free and raised beds have been created for use by disabled people.

Plotholders are actively engaged in developing the site as whole. Work recently finished on 'The Triangle' - a communal social area, now planted with espaliered fruit trees, with benches and bbq. One-third of an acre within the site has been set aside for the establishment of 'New Shoots' permaculture area and planning and planting is already underway (for details, see the feature in next Dig In). Future plans include creation of large communal shed for tool storage and selling items.



2010



2013

Hesketh Bank

October 2013

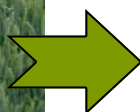




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2011



2013

## St Teresa's Allotment Group (STAG)

Things have been going well at this beautifully situated site, set up in February 2011. As well as the 34 plots, the group has constructed a new path access from the church car park to the site and now has a communal shed for tool storage.

The site does not have mains water, but various options are being investigated to collect water.

There is currently no waiting list for plots. The site also has two plots for use by a community group. These are currently vacant and STAG would love to hear from anyone who could use this resource. Email Andrew at [ajsouthworth63@btinternet.com](mailto:ajsouthworth63@btinternet.com)



Upholland





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



## Owen Avenue

Owen Avenue is a small council owned site that had fallen into disrepair. A group of dedicated local people took on the site in 2011 - clearing the rubbish and bracken growth and bringing the allotments back into life and production. There are 11 plots and all are enthusiastically tended and highly productive.

Ormskirk



Appley Bridge

## Appley Bridge Allotment Society

Appley Bridge is the most recently established allotment site with 14 microplots being established there in Spring 2012. The site has no vehicular access and no fencing but has been largely vandalism free and proved a popular local addition to the canalside Meadows area.



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## Skelmersdale

### Digmoor Inspired Growers Allotment Society

The DIGAS site was one of the most difficult sites to get up and running and is testament to the determination of local people to 'grow their own'. 2010 saw them start the battle for planning permission, get grants to put up security fencing to reduce vandalism, buy a storage container, negotiate land boundaries with neighbours, and start to clear the site of saplings and years of dumped rubbish.

Now in 2013, the site is thriving and highly productive, with a waiting list of 15 for the 8 plots. The annual seed and plant share held early each year provides the perfect start to the growing year. There are plans to create a communal orchard, a blackcurrant hedge and some hazel trees to provide bean poles.



## Views from all the new sites

*WE made it all, so we feel responsible for it. It's a legacy for the future and we feel so proud to have done it*

*The people have been the best thing; meeting people with the same interests and convictions*

*Eating a lot more veg! As well as getting outside more and trying new things—eg making jam*

*The neighbours are delighted and they look out for the site*

### Best thing about setting up our site...

*We could design the site ourselves and design it well. We set our own guidelines—eg size and position of the sheds—which keeps it looking neat*

*The community spirit—we've been through it all together*

*It's been the start of a new community, with everyone starting at the same time, and lots of younger people became involved because of that*



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

*Would do it exactly  
the same next time!*

## What we would do differently next time...

*I would manage things  
more tightly from the  
outset— making sure  
committee members are  
fully active and plots are  
up to standard from start*

*Would be good to give  
new allotmenters a  
quarter plot to work,  
before allocating them  
their final plot*

*Maybe introduce a few more  
curves into the site design,  
and design in some central  
composting areas*

## Other News

### Free Trees

West Lancs have launched their Free Tree scheme for this year. A free fruit tree (Victoria plum, Conference pear or Bramley apple) or a hedging pack (10 hawthorn, 5 blackthorn, 5 rowan, 5 hazel) is available to each household in West Lancs. Go to: [www.westlancs.gov.uk/planning/heritage\\_and\\_environment/trees\\_hedges\\_and\\_woodlands/free\\_tree\\_scheme.aspx](http://www.westlancs.gov.uk/planning/heritage_and_environment/trees_hedges_and_woodlands/free_tree_scheme.aspx)

Closing date for applications is 25<sup>th</sup> October

### New Fence 'Opening' at Burscough

Jan Kellie - Secretary BAS reports:  
'Burscough Allotment Society officially  
"opened" their new fencing in June this year so  
we put up the bunting and held an open day.

'Despite the poor weather we had a good turn  
out of visitors to sample our cordials - (rhubarb  
and blackcurrant) - our cakes (courgette and  
beetroot), our flower "bombs", scarecrows,  
spare plants and garden books, and "borrowed"  
some chickens for the day. All our plots were  
looking great- we have had a wonderful  
productive year and all of us are enjoying our  
plentiful produce. We hope to repeat the open  
day next year'.



October 2013



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

## **Report from West Lancs Allotments' Federation**

July proved that we really can get long hot summer days. It was also a very busy month for us building a garden at RHS Tatton Park Flower Show. Our individual allotment garden, 'Recycle and Grow' earned us a 'Highly Commended' Award. We featured a greenhouse made from recycled bottles, a compost bin made from recycled pallets and raised beds from recycled pallet collars. We also demonstrated a selection of mulches from recycled materials that included wood chip, leaf mould, seaweed and straw, also Nettle and Comfrey liquid manures. The larger joint venture with the other North West Region Federations; The NAS 'The Magic of Growing' received a 'Best Show Feature' 2013 Award.



The mayor of West Lancashire, Iain Ashcroft and wife Beverley, along with the mayors from most of the other boroughs involved, came along on the first press day. The next few days we were kept busy talking to hundreds of visitors, the bottle greenhouse being the highlight. On Saturday Rosie Cooper the Member of Parliament for West Lancashire paid us a visit on our allotment garden to join in the celebrations.



Pictured L-R: Terry Lake WLAFF, Mayoress and Mayor of West Lancashire, Ray and Myra Fowler WLAFF.

The weather stayed hot and sunny right through to the last day—when we were treated to heavy rain and flooding. Monday was breakdown day and six of us got wet all over again—with added thunder and lightning.

Our thanks to all those un-named allotmenters from around the Borough who helped with this production. And a very special thanks to Terry Lake who project managed the whole venture. **Ray Fowler, Chair**

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.

**Martin Trengove** CVS Project Co-ordinator  
**Debbie Shepton** CVS Community Support  
**John Hutchison,** CVS School Mentor  
**Clare Cooper** CVS School Mentor  
**& Terry Lake** CVS School Mentor

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Keep up to date at our website: [www.wlcvs.org/index.php/services/community-gardening](http://www.wlcvs.org/index.php/services/community-gardening)



West Lancashire Council for  
Voluntary Service

**NHS**  
Central Lancashire

West Lancashire  
Local Strategic Partnership

change  
4 life

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