

Dig In

Community Food Growing in West Lancashire

Tawd Valley Allotment site work underway



We are delighted to report that work is now underway to construct a new allotment site in Ashurst, Skelmersdale near to Manfield. This new 34 plot site has been funded by West Lancashire Borough Council and it is anticipated that it will be in operation by late May. Talks are underway for the site to be managed by a nearby existing Allotment Society.

Plot allocation will be starting in the near future and initially plots will be offered to anyone on existing waiting lists in Skelmersdale (i.e on the waiting lists for Skelmersdale Horticultural Society, Liverpool Road Allotment Society and DIGAS) and then to other applicants in the Skelmersdale area.

If you are interested in a plot but don't want to go on the above waiting lists, please contact Sue Austin, Leisure Services, West Lancashire Borough Council on 01695 585146 or sue.austin@westlancs.gov.uk

Another new site?

The Borough Council is also looking to fund a second new site somewhere in Skelmersdale - ideally in the Old Skelmersdale area. If anyone has any ideas for this second new site location, please let us know!

Potato Day interviews



Among those who attended this year's successful Potato Day was Neil Hickson from Burcough Community Farm. As well as setting up the first Community Supported Agriculture project in West Lancs, Neil is an enthusiastic podcaster and makes his interviews available on his blog, LivingCycle. To hear his interviews from the Potato Day - about potatoes and more generally, allotments in West Lancs, go to: <http://livingcycle.uk/2016/03/episode-03-skelmersdale-potato-day/>

April 2016

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

West Lancs Allotments Federation



Work starting on the new Tawd Vale allotment site in Skelmersdale.

The Federation started the year with its Potato Day on January 30th. Our thanks go to the Concourse management for letting us set up there again. We were all very pleased to be 'inside' as the weather outside gave us four seasons in one day - including rain, hail and snow! The event was well supported as usual - so thank you to all who helped on the day and thanks to all our customers. Hope to see you all again next year!

In February we held our Annual General Meeting at the council offices Ormskirk, (thanks to WLBC). The AGM was well attended this year and we were pleased to welcome two new additions to the management committee. They are Vanessa Hartend from Skelmersdale Horticultural Society and John Daniel Jaques from STAG Upholland. After the AGM business, we enjoyed a well illustrated presentation from Neil and Jane Hickson on the trials and tribulations of the December flooding at the Organic Veg Club in Burscough.

The next meeting of WLAf is on Wednesday 27th April at The Greyhound, Aughton St. Ormskirk, starting 7.30pm. All welcome to join us there.

So far the weather has not been helpful to us on the allotments, it can only get better - hopefully, very soon.



Finally some good news to end with. Work has started on the new allotment site in Ashurst - see picture above. Not long to go now and those waiting lists will be getting shorter.

Ray Fowler, WLAf Secretary



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

Organic Veg Club bounces back!

“ Who’d have thought a couple of months ago that we would have been working this land. After being 5 feet under water it’s amazing how things have dried out ”



After the doom of December, Neil Hickson reports on his blog that there’s plenty of signs of hope at OVC



Jan 23rd: *Things are drying out on the farm, yet the 'Rufford Mere' is still very much a part of the landscape. A few interesting things have shown up on the field since the water has gone down. The main ones being fish - flatfish, plaice to be precise. These are not the thing that you expect to find on an arable field several miles inland.*



Feb 21st: *Clear-up time. Collecting driftwood left by the flood from the veg beds.*



March 2nd: *My biggest surprise of this week was to find myself hoeing garlic that had spent time being 5 feet under water. We’ve bought some more garlic to plant as we assumed the first batch would have perished in the flood!*



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April 2nd: *We worried how badly this hedge would suffer after it had been buried under floating debris from the flood, piles of pallets lay strewn across it. Planting it was our first project on the farm and now it begins its third growing season. We need not have worried as it is springing back into life. **Nature and its powers of recovery are amazing.***



April 9th: *After their dramatic rescue by boat in December, we now have our chickens back on site - with the addition of two Marsh Daisy cockerels and some more Marsh Daisy hens. Graham has started to keep some of the eggs from the Marsh Daisy hens so that we can re-start our Marsh Daisy breeding programme.*

At their AGM in February, Organic Veg Club became a CIC (Community Interest Company) and is now called **Burscough Community Farm**. It is a 'not for profit' social enterprise and one of their main purposes is to benefit the community.

As part of its development this year, Burscough Community Farm is looking grow its membership as well as increase the numbers signing up for Veg Boxes. There are **two types of membership** so you can sign up for either a 'Casual Share' membership or a 'Veg Scheme Share' Membership. For more information, go to: <http://burscoughcommunityfarm.org/join-us/>

Active West Lancs

The CVS Community Food Growing project will be funded for the next 3 years as part of the Active West Lancs programme. This is a partnership of five key organisations - ourselves, West Lancs School Sport Partnership, West Lancs Borough Council, West Lancs Community Leisure Trust and Skelmersdale Community Food Initiative - and aims to increase health and well-being by encouraging people to get more active.

Key activities of interest to food growers will include:

- Supporting existing allotment sites and communal food growing initiatives and helping to create new ones
- Encouraging the development of School Allotments and getting youngsters involved in understanding where their food comes from
- Running events for primary schools to showcase their school allotments
- Aim to get more people active, especially those looking for something interesting to do

There will be an Active West Lancs partnership website to showcase what's on offer - more details in the next Dig In!



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New funding sources

Tesco Bags of Help Grants: The Tesco Bags of Help scheme is open to community groups to apply for grants of £8,000, £10,000 and £12,000 to improve local green space. Projects that will get the green light will include new pocket parks, sports facilities, wildlife areas, and community gardens.

The Tesco Bags of Help scheme is administered by Groundwork and funded by Tesco customers from the proceeds of the 5p charge for plastic carrier bags. Tesco customers will be able to cast their vote on which shortlisted project in their area they would like to see receive the top grant from 1 October 2016. Find out more about the [application process here](#).

Small Environmental Grants: Greggs Foundation is interested in projects that improve the physical environment in a way that will improve people's lives. This can include purchase of equipment, sessional salary costs, purchase of trees/plants, small capital projects and learning activities. They are also interested in new approaches and innovative ideas as well as sustainable approaches to supporting your local environment. <https://www.greggsfoundation.org.uk/small-environment-grants>

LocalGiving for Environmental Projects: *Localgiving* has teamed up with the People's Postcode Lottery to provide in the North West with the chance to develop their online fundraising capabilities. Eligible groups will receive free membership of *Localgiving* (normally £72) as well as up to £500 for each group in match-funding for the donations they receive through *Localgiving*.

Groups must be running projects which enable people to engage with the environment. This can include groups where the environmental benefit is secondary, for instance a befriending service running a gardening project. Charities affected by the recent flooding are also eligible. For more information, visit <http://join.localgiving.org/northwest>

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: www.wlcvs.org/?page_id=28



West Lancashire Council for
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