

Dig In

Community Food Growing in West Lancashire

Local school growers 'Show What You Grow'

Green fingered school children from across West Lancashire celebrated their growing achievements this summer at our annual 'Show What You Grow' festival of school gardening. Over 60 children from 9 schools brought school grown produce, scarecrows and displays of drawings, paintings, and photos of their gardening work to the event at West Lancashire College, Skelmersdale on July 11th.



The Mayor and Mayoress of West Lancashire Cllr Noel Delaney and Mrs Ann Stubbart officially opened the day, and were given a tour of the displays by each school. The children then enthusiastically took part in activities such as making a veggie creature, an Allotment Quiz, and a Grow Your Own activity book. After lunch, the children took to the stage to give presentations about their gardening clubs and the day ended with prize giving.

A Skelmersdale based business called 'All About Food' donated a prize for the Best Display of Work. The lucky winning school was Crawford Primary whose gardening club will visit All About Food's office The Tree House, to find out more about their partnership with farmers and sustainable agriculture. They will then be treated to lunch at Nando's as part of the prize package!

The event was organised by the Community Food Growing Project of West Lancs CVS (as part of the Active West Lancs programme) in conjunction with West Lancs Allotment Federation and West Lancashire College, and was funded by Upholland Tawd Vale Lions. The event was supported by the local business community – M.A Forshaw of Scarisbrick provided the vegetables and prizes were donated by Morrisons supermarket.

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West Lancashire Allotments' Federation news

West Lancs Allotment Federation had a very successful stand at this year's Green Fayre held at the Beacon Country Park over the summer. We had a great interactive quiz where people had to match the seeds to the vegetable (after they worked out what the vegetables on display were). Children loved the fresh fruit and vegetable prizes we gave them for having a go at the quiz.

The Best Plot Competition was again kindly sponsored by West Lancashire Council and Stephen Lowe from BBC Radio Lancashire volunteered to judge the entries. Steve Martin of Skelmersdale Horticultural Society won the title this year and is shown (right) receiving his prize from WLAFF Secretary Johndaniel Jaques.

We also had some wonderful produce grown on local allotments on display.

In other news St Teresa's Allotment Group (STAG) in Upholland has vacant plots. If anyone is interested please drop Alan a text on 07956 402681, or find them on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/groups/1706851572776855/>

If you would like a plot elsewhere in West Lancs drop WLAFF an email at wlaflsecretary@outlook.com indicating what areas you would be interested in.

WLAFF Secretary - Johndaniel Jaques



West Lancashire Allotment's Federation

New community orchard for Skelmersdale



A new community orchard is being created this Autumn, as part of the ongoing regeneration work in Tawd Valley Park, Skelmersdale.

The orchard will be situated alongside the allotment site at Manfield, Ashurst and the Council is looking for volunteers to help plant and create this new area. Please get in touch with Paula Campbell if you are interested in getting involved. Phone Paula on 01695-585144 or email paula.campbell@westlancs.gov.uk.

A new website has been created for the Tawd Valley Park project which gives details of the regeneration plans and schedule: Check it out at: www.tawd.net

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NEW - The Big Allotment @ Burscough Community Farm

Neil Hickson writes: Burscough Community Farm would like to announce our 'Big Allotment' project, creating a Community Allotment right in the heart of the project.

Since it started five years ago, Burscough Community Farm has striven to bring people together to grow organic food. We have done this through our veg box scheme, but now we think it's time to dedicate a space specifically for a community allotment.



Why a 'Community Allotment' rather than individual allotments?

In some ways, the market garden we've developed over the last five growing seasons has worked a bit like one large allotment, so it gave us the idea that this could really work. It will give people the opportunity to grow crops that we wouldn't grow commercially, and give them the experience of growing food for themselves.

Community Spirit

Working your own allotment can be a bit intimidating and a lot of hard work. This comes as a surprise to many people who try it for the first time. The great thing about a community allotment is that you can go on holiday or have a weekend away, there's someone else to keep up with the watering and weeding. You can also take advantage of using some of the farm's heavier tools.

There's always been a massive waiting list in this area for allotments, and people have been on lists for years waiting for their own space to come up. We know what it's like when you have the urge to get growing your own food, but don't have anywhere to do it.

Teaching Space

We have been looking at developing courses and workshops on the farm for a few years now. Teaching organic growing techniques was always going to be top of the list. The new Community Allotment will act as a teaching space for some of the growing courses and workshops that will be held on the farm in the springtime. By becoming a friend of the farm (£30.00 per year, per household), you are welcome to attend our rolling program of monthly organic growing workshops so you get the chance to learn right through the growing season. (Free to unwaged/low income).

You can find out more about our training courses and workshops on our [website here](#). New dates are being added all the time, so [subscribe to our newsletter](#) to see what is coming up in the future.

If you are interested in joining our Big Allotment, please email Neil on: burscoughcommunityfarm@gmail.com



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WLBC Free Tree Scheme 2018 - 5 days to apply!

Keen gardeners living in West Lancashire can sign up for the Borough Council's successful Free Tree Scheme which is being launched again on Monday 22 October 2018.

The Free Tree Scheme, first introduced in October 2008, aims to improve the Borough's environment and attract more wildlife into local people's gardens by encouraging residents to plant trees. Since then, over 6,000 new trees have been given to residents to plant throughout the Borough.

This year applicants can choose one of two different varieties of fruit tree, Bramley Apple and Victoria Plum. Trees provided will be approximately two-years-old and will be about 1 metre tall. The Victoria Plum has been the most successful of all the trees offered since the scheme began and there is a rather poignant story about the popular Bramley's Seedling. The original tree, the Mother of all Bramley Apples, is currently dying of a fungal infection. The Council would like to continue the legacy of the Bramley Apple by offering residents a chance to pick up a free 'Bramley's Seedling' tree as part of the scheme.

Also to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the end of World War One the Council will continue to offer a packet of free 'Flanders Poppy' seeds in tribute to those who lost their lives during the war.

To find out more and apply for the trees and seeds, [visit our website](#) from Monday 22nd October. Applications will close on Friday 26th October but interested residents should apply as soon as possible as the number of trees available is limited and will be allocated on a first come, first served basis. If the maximum number is allocated before Friday 26th October the Council will close the application process.

Trees will be allocated in time for planting during National Tree Week 2018, which runs from 24 November to 2 December. Trees provided under the scheme are only available to West Lancashire Borough residents and must be planted in the borough.



Free Trees for community groups and schools

Schools, nurseries, colleges, and other groups such as resident associations, sports clubs, parish councils, scouts, guides are amongst the organisations eligible to apply for up to 420 trees to improve their local environment. Tree packs available include hedging, copse, wild-harvest, year round colour, working wood, wild-wood and urban trees. The Woodland Trust is currently taking applications for trees to be planted in March 2019.



See website: www.woodlandtrust.org.uk/plant-trees/free-trees/



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Environment Agency team helps out at Burscough Community Farm

Neil Hickson writes: On Tuesday October 2nd, a working party from The Environment Agency came along to the farm to help us out with a few jobs and what they achieved was massive! Besides mowing most of the paths on the field and between many of our new woodland saplings, they cleared out one of our polytunnels, took up the floor, levelled and re-laid it.

They mulched trees, weeded our vegetable beds and planted out some of next year's flower crops. But the biggest job they did was to lay us a brilliant pathway that enables wheelchair users to access from our parking area to the barn, and disabled access to the composting toilet; something that will be of great benefit.

We are so very grateful for what they did and the fantastic enthusiasm with which they got stuck into the tasks. It was obvious how much the members of the team enjoyed themselves as well. It was a great day, and they are welcome to come back whenever they want to!



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!**

Debbie Shepton
Alison Wall
Claire Cooper

CVS Community Support
CVS School Mentor
CVS School Mentor

Email: debbies@wlcvs.org
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Keep up to date at our website: www.wlcvs.org/projects/community-food-growing/



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