



## IT'S YOUR NEIGHBOURHOOD - MARKING SHEET

<b>Name of group:</b> Organic Growers of Fairlie	<b>Assessment date:</b> 30 <sup>th</sup> July 2016
<b>Name of assessor:</b> Martha Halbert and Hugh James Killen	
<b>Introduction:</b> A local community group of volunteer individuals has transformed a Council owned piece of contaminated land, due to its previous use as a boat and train yard (oils and paints), into a hugely valuable community resource and a haven of tranquillity and productivity in Fairlie. All produce is grown on raised beds which lie above a sheet membrane to prevent contamination. The community of gardeners there is strong, and it was really inspiring to see the array of produce on display. A committee keeps the local community up to date with a regular newsletter.	
<b>Section A - Community Participation (40% or 40 points)</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Approximately 200 gardeners from across Largs and Fairlie pay a nominal fee per year to rent a bed or two. Most gardeners have a bed outside, and one inside one of the polytunnels. One disabled gardener has an easily accessible bed.</li> <li>• The group coordinates with other gardening groups and uses this as a helpful exchange of ideas.</li> <li>• Strongly involved in Douglas Park – community service volunteers will help with grass cutting. Created a Douglas Park Open Day 'sow and grow'.</li> <li>• Works with Street Scene (the N. Ayrshire Council parks department).</li> <li>• City Garden member.</li> <li>• Held a potato learning day led by the potato council advice.</li> <li>• Community payback – 'Enterprising minds' volunteer – social initiative with a mix of activities to support people with challenges.</li> <li>• Connection with Morrison's construction – possibly will help with materials and skills for Douglas Park Pavillion.</li> <li>• St Matthews 4<sup>th</sup> year group attended a garden walk here. Children wild about gardens help support local wildlife including hedgehogs. Cubs and Beavers in the area use a little woodland trail which has been created around the garden. Hosts a Scouts day every month.</li> <li>• A number of smaller raised beds have been made available to children of the growers, to experiment with growing projects.</li> <li>• The garden receives sponsorship from Bee Green and Froglife, the latter of which has supported the development of a pond which aids biodiversity on site. The pond will evolve as plants mature.</li> <li>• The group sources much of the plants from a social enterprise run nursery.</li> <li>• Group supports local station project (partnership working with ScotRail and windfarm funding), which has planted barrels and hanging baskets.</li> <li>• Planning on hosting a halloween day with a Harry Potter theme – discovery tour around the garden.</li> </ul>	



<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Works with Largs allotment group on sensory herbs and fruit orchard.</li> </ul>	
Total points assessed for Section A (out of 40)	40
<b>Section B - Environmental Responsibility (30% or 30 points)</b>	
<p>The group is engaged in environmental activities such as: (e.g. conservation, composting, improving green space, reducing litter and dog fouling)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The group produces all its own compost on site - 10-15 t per year.</li> <li>• The nearby Kelburn Estate provides rotted horse manure for fertilizer.</li> <li>• The gardeners make their own comfrey mix and nettle mix onsite for fertilizer.</li> <li>• The garden practises rain water collection and encourages hand watering from the main building which acts as a small kitchen, dining area, networking hub – talks area, and side storage unit for garden equipment/tools. The raised beds are also all lined to maximise water retention. It would be very difficult to collect water run-off from the polytunnels arched roof.</li> <li>• The raised beds are made from recycled scaffold planks.</li> <li>• Two wormeries are successfully maintained and used on site – reuse vegetable cuttings to feed wormery and learning how to use it better.</li> <li>• The garden is very encouraging of organic practices.</li> <li>• Reuse of brownfield contaminated land.</li> <li>• Seaweed used to help fertilise site at Douglas Park.</li> <li>• Pavillion and toilets possibly used for workshops in future.</li> </ul>	
Total points assessed for Section B (out of 30)	29
<b>Gardening Achievement (30% or 30 points)</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The garden has a large propagating greenhouse which encourages members to grow their produce from seed.</li> <li>• Picnic areas adjacent have been done up for the wider community to use (supported by Hunterston windfarm fund). This area includes planted edibles and hanging baskets.</li> <li>• A permaculture workshop was run in the garden which was open to the public.</li> <li>• An amazing variety of crops could be seen on our visit - grapes, tomatoes, artichoke, herbs, salads, cucumber and many more.</li> <li>• Sustainable planting – weeds reduced through ground sheets.</li> <li>• Douglas Park site source use apple tree man – fruit trees and rhubarb.</li> </ul>	
Total points assessed for Section C (out of 30)	29
<b>GRAND TOTAL POINTS ASSESSED</b>	<b>98</b>
<b>LEVEL ACHIEVED</b>	<b>Outstanding</b>

**Areas of achievement:**

This was a stunning garden to visit, and the ethos of volunteer led allotments was so impressive. The connections this group of gardeners have made with the broader community is inspiring, and continue to lend their expertise to gardening groups and projects on a national basis. It seemed that the garden is a welcoming place for gardeners of all levels of expertise and ability; we have no doubt that the group's contribution to local council's sustainability strategy will lend great perspective to





development of this kind of project elsewhere in the region.

**Areas for development:**

- The group could make available a cycle shelter and somewhere for people to lock up bikes - this would increase possibility of sustainable travel options to the garden and link up with cycle path and walking routes.
- It might be worth assessing whether it might be feasible to install solar panels on the barn roof, if this building is going to be used more often.
- The local windfarm fund may be able to provide funding for a micro wind turbine to provide on site electricity.

## RESULTS

Level	Description	Points
Level 1	Establishing	0-35
Level 2	Improving	36-52
Level 3	Advancing	53-68
Level 4	Thriving	69-85
Level 5	Outstanding	86-100

