

IT'S YOUR NEIGHBOURHOOD - MARKING SHEET

Name of group: Organic Growers of Fairlie	Assessment date: August 16th
Name of assessor: Martha Halbert	
<p>Introduction:</p> <p>A small group of volunteer individuals has transformed a piece of contaminated land, previously a boat and train yard, derelict for 25 years, into a hugely valuable community resource and a haven of tranquillity and productivity in Fairlie. The community of gardeners there is strong and it was really inspiring to see the array of produce on display. A committee of ten people keeps the community up to date with a regular newsletter.</p>	
<p>Section A - Community Participation (40% or 40 points)</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gardeners include around 200 people from across Largs and Fairlie who pay a nominal fee per year to rent a bed. • The group coordinates with other gardening and allotment groups in the area. • It is working closely with the local authority to find a solution to the desperate lack of available allotments. • The raised beds have been adapted to make the site a great resource for elderly or wheelchair users. • The group sources much of the plants from a social enterprise run nursery. • The Cubs and Beavers in the area use a little woodland trail which has been created around the garden. • The Children's home in Fairlie is keen to get involved with the garden. • A number of smaller raised beds have been made available to children of the growers, to experiment with growing projects. • The garden receives sponsorship from Bee Green and Froglife, the latter of which is keen to support the development of a pond on site. • For Ayrshire Doors Open Day, the garden ran an open day, including a craft stall, a musical duo and a quiz for kids. Donations for Fair Trade drinks were given to the Fairtrade foundation. 	
Total points assessed for Section A (out of 40)	38
<p>Section B - Environmental Responsibility (30% or 30 points)</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The group produces all its own compost on site. • The nearby Kelburn Estate provides rotted horse manure for fertiliser. • Each gardener who is given a raised bed is also allocated a polytunnel bed. • The gardeners make their own comfrey mix and nettle mix onsite for fertiliser. • The garden practises rain water collection and encourages hand watering. The raised 	



beds are also all lined to maximise water retention.	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The raised beds are made from recycled scaffold planks. • A wormery is maintained on site. • The garden is very encouraging of organic practises. 	
Total points assessed for Section B (out of 30)	30
Gardening Achievement (30% or 30 points)	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Because the ground is contaminated, the lease stipulates that raised beds must be used for all planting. This has encouraged very creative use of space by the gardeners. • The garden has a large propagating greenhouse which encourages members to grow their produce from seed. • The group is running workshops on Winter Growing to maximise productivity throughout the year. • A permaculture workshop was run in the garden which was open to the public. • An amazing variety of crops could be seen on my visit - grapes, tomatoes, artichoke, herbs, salads, and cucumber to name just a few. 	
Total points assessed for Section C (out of 30)	28
GRAND TOTAL POINTS ASSESSED	96
LEVEL ACHIEVED	Outstanding

Areas of achievement:

This was a stunning garden to visit, and the ethos of volunteer led allotments was so impressive. It seemed that the garden is a welcoming place for gardeners of all levels of expertise; I 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.
- Would a microturbine on site be a possibility?

RESULTS

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

