



IT'S YOUR NEIGHBOURHOOD - MARKING SHEET

Name of group: Organic Growers of Fairlie	Assessment date: 29/6/2014
Name of assessor:	Robin Miller
<p>Introduction: (Please give a brief bit of background about the group / project)</p> <p>From a derelict and polluted brownfield site to a stunning community garden in a mere six years, the Organic Growers of Fairlie is committed to living a healthier, more sustainable lifestyle and improving the environment.</p> <p>Supporting around a hundred raised beds, supported by three impressive poly tunnels, the Growers also process all their own garden and kitchen waste by composting and vermiculture.</p> <p>From artichoke to zucchini, and almost every plant in between, the Organic Growers of Fairlie haa a stunning community garden that is enjoyed not only by the gardeners but also by the wider community from near and far.</p>	
<p>Section A - Community Participation (40% or 40 points)</p>	
<p>The group is working towards things such as: (e.g. involving local people, working in partnership, gaining support)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The group has a well-defined vision to contribute to healthier living for all of the community. • The group acquired (at a peppercorn rent) an area of previously brownfield site from North Ayrshire Council and has, with help from the Climate Challenge Fund, transformed it to a treasured facility for all of the community. • Over a hundred raised beds are available to the community, and considerable thought has gone into design to include the wheelchair user. The use of very small and brightly coloured beds for children is inspired. • The garden applies an Open Door Policy, and during my visit it was evident that this was taken up. The enthusiasm of the committee, and the knowledge of the head gardener, are infectious and encouraging. • There are excellent facilities for children, and planned visits are a regular feature from many schools both within the area and across Scotland. In fact, please refer to http://organicgrowersfairlie.co.uk/Come_Visit_Us.php for a feel of how widespread and successful this is. • Fun events are not excluded and, following last year's <i>UK all-comers attempt on the highest number of Chinese carry-out meals consumed in a community garden</i>, this years' Gala Day will continue to add a fun aspect to community inclusion. • The group's activities are well publicised through the very informative website http://organicgrowersfairlie.co.uk/Home_Page.php and active Facebook page which helps publicise this valuable community asset. 	
<p>Total points assessed for Section A (out of 40)</p>	<p>35</p>

**Section B - Environmental Responsibility (30% or 30 points)**

The group is engaged in environmental activities such as:
(e.g. conservation, composting, improving green space, reducing litter and dog fouling)

- Environmental responsibility is at the heart of the Organic Growers of Fairlie's vision.
- Organic gardening principles are applied throughout and more information is available at http://organicgrowersfairlie.co.uk/Organic_Gardening.php
- The use of peat free composts is supplemented with the garden's own recycled plants, and home produced mulch from grass and hedge clippings
- In fact, if it is left lying nearby, the chances are that the Fairlie Group will recycle it. Horse manure, locally cropped seaweed, they all demonstrably contribute to a very real and a very productive organic garden,
- Home grown comfrey (mixed with five parts water) add a very pungent (if you visit the Fairlie Garden then I encourage you to smell it) fertilizer.
- A wide variety of insects are attracted by the sheer colour and spread of plants and flowers. This is further complimented with a perimeter path; taken all together the wildlife is aplenty, with various gulls and oyster catcher most prevalent.
- The group also recycles food for wormcast and as a result has a very successful wormery
- If all the above is not enough the group even found the time to contribute to the Keep Scotland's Beautiful litter campaign and Clean Up of Fairlie Beach.
- Bearing in mind that only five years ago this was a brownfield site (and prior to that a railway station!), the Organic Growers of Fairlie continue to work with SEPA to monitor pollution levels (very positive results here).
- The strategic planting of common thistles (away from the good stuff) attracts and ensures that the abundant black fly don't destroy the gardeners' crops. Brilliant!

Total points assessed for Section B (out of 30)

30

Gardening Achievement (30% or 30 points)

The group is employing good gardening practices appropriate to the area, such as:
(e.g. good plant choice, creative design, maintenance of plants)

- The gardening achievements in the Fairlie Community Garden are singularly and collectively impressive.
- Whilst each of the allotment tenants are free to grow what they wish, the overall design of the garden has been designed thoughtfully.
- Three good sized poly tunnels offer the tenants the opportunity to grow everything from sweetcorn to aubergine, to umpteen varieties of tomato and even grapes, as well as south African Squash.
- The raised beds offer the traditional plants and vegetables of Scotland as well as a cacophony of colour from blooming garlic to arrangements of bedding plants.
- Wild flower areas at the entrance and perimeter of the community garden add a real warmth to the facility.
- Local rainwater (I am advised that there is often plenty of it) is collected and used throughout.
- Weed control on the site is excellent, and there is a judicious use of nettle and bark to help in this area.

Total points assessed for Section C (out of 30)

29





GRAND TOTAL POINTS ASSESSED	94
LEVEL ACHIEVED	OUTSTANDING

Areas of achievement:

Fairlie Community Garden is a truly stunning example of community participation, environmental responsibility and first class gardening. The group continues to achieve and is an exemplar to other community gardening groups throughout Scotland.

- Brownfield to a stunning community garden in only six years. Very impressive.
- Further development of the frontispiece has a welcoming feature to the garden.
- Inclusion of ALL of the community. There is a very real warmth to this project and the smiles, welcome and warmth are infectious.
- Commitment to the environment through responsible and eco-friendly composting and fertilizing techniques are proven to work in practice.
- The strategic planting of thistles to distract the abundant black fly, is simply inspired. Well done indeed.
- Excellent organisation and dynamic. An enthusiastic committee who are resourceful and committed to the groups goals.

Areas for development:

- The Organic Growers of Fairlie has a solid and impressive foundation for its community garden. The group is constantly aware of where improvements can be made and these include:
 - Pond development, and working with Frog Life will provide yet another invaluable addition to the garden.
- Above all more of the same please! Keep going and continue to succeed.
- Well done Fairlie, a very impressive facility and community.

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

