

## IT'S YOUR NEIGHBOURHOOD - MARKING SHEET

<b>Name of group:</b> Organic Growers of Fairlie	<b>Assessment date:</b> 21 <sup>st</sup> June 2018
<b>Name of assessor:</b> John MacLennan	
<b>Introduction:</b>  Organic Growers of Fairlie have changed a piece of contaminated land into a haven of growing plots. Their enthusiasm is infectious and their willingness to share the experiences with others makes this group someone to listen to and approach.	
<b>Section A - Community Participation (40% or 40 points)</b>	
<p>The group has offered plots and beds at their hub to over two hundred growers in the wider Fairlie community. These beds or plots use traditional organic methodology. However, they share their expertise elsewhere within Fairlie &amp; Largs such as secondary schools - Largs Academy &amp; St. Matthews Academy; and primary schools - Fairlie PS, Largs PS, &amp; Mayfield PS, Saltcoats. The group helps out with Enterprise projects, encourages John Muir activity, and is a learning resource for all those involved in education. Their involvement in community gardening includes sharing their expertise by mentoring others with examples being groups in St. Andrews &amp; Stirling as well as within West Central Scotland such as those in Irvine, Largs &amp; Finnieston.</p> <p>Within the wider community they are involved with gardening for dementia groups, for example at Haylie House, and also at The Haven, Kilmacolm, a Christian charity providing a residential programme for men with alcohol or drug addictions.</p> <p>Their base at the garden is also used by the wider community for events such as a Gin Tasting Event!</p> <p>This is a group who share their skills and facilities to all and is fully inclusive in all its approaches. A visit to the Organic Growers of Fairlie is an honour and pleasure as an IYN assessor.</p>	
Total points assessed for Section A (out of 40)	40
<b>Section B - Environmental Responsibility (30% or 30 points)</b>	
<p>In all their activities this group adhere closely to the principles and practices of organic gardening. On viewing their growing crops they are pest and disease free, which I was informed was due to the organic content of their media as well as the use of their comfrey, seaweed and nettle fertiliser 'brewed' on site. On site over twenty tonnes of compost are produced for their own use and there are working wormeries - a site of special scientific interest to the younger generation! A clear effort has been made to plant pollinators throughout the garden. The beds were constructed from recycled scaffolding wood.</p> <p>As well as traditional organic based raised beds, Hugel Kultur is being explored and their</p>	



experiences will be networked among others.

Originally the site was a boat yard as well as railway sidings and so contaminated land has been reclaimed into production. Because of previous chemical use and contamination crop production was required to be in raised beds. Their expertise in this area is shared with other interested parties.

The group has an involvement with Challenge Poverty and is supportive of green box initiatives.

Pond dipping is encouraged via Be Green, and Froglife, and with the pond being within the garden there are the benefits of frogs and all in pest control.

Rain water is collected thus reducing water footprint.

There is a rich coastal flora which may require some further thought and discussion on whether natural regeneration should be encouraged or planting plugs of native wild flowers.

Total points assessed for Section B (out of 30)	29
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**Gardening Achievement (30% or 30 points)**

On arrival at the garden the visitor is greeted with a splash of instant colour and throughout there are numerous plantings of interest - for colour, their edible use, and environmental value.

On this site there is a wide range of edibles produced, the condition of which is clean & healthy. Weed reduction is achieved by the use of companion planting plus using geotextile sheets; likewise the presence of pests & diseases is reduced by companion plantings plus the use of organic home produced sprays. The group also provide a range of gardening talks plus have organised a seed exchange/library which results in less seed wastage among all.

On the marches of the garden a woodland and eco walkway is being developed which will give the group another step in community gardening to develop and excel in.

If one arrives at Fairlie by train instead of drab weedy planters which are often seen there are numerous barrels of perennial plantings as well as fence mounted troughs. It is clear that Scotrail/Network Rail have, for health & safety reasons, several restrictions on what can be undertaken but it is clearly evident that group has provided a colourful welcome to the village.

Total points assessed for Section C (out of 30)	29
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GRAND TOTAL POINTS ASSESSED	98
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<b>LEVEL ACHIEVED</b>	<b>Level 5 - Outstanding</b>
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### **Areas of achievement:**

This group has clearly embraced the key areas of It's Your Neighbourhood and their desire to encourage others, near & far, in organic community gardening must be commended. Within the team there is a vast range of skills and by visiting Fairlie their mark is clear for all to see. Their willingness to be involved in primary, secondary & tertiary education must be noted plus their methodology of being inclusive.

### **Recommendations/suggestions from your assessor:**

During the visit mention was made of entering Fairlie in the Beautiful Scotland competition and it is obvious that this is one of the next steps to take. The group is good at sharing their expertise and maybe one method to explore is one of team becoming an IYN assessor - to be fair by mentoring so effectively such an idea is just formalising something that exists.

The area of flora close to the sea and within the picnic area has the potential to be developed into a native coastal flora feature, and it is suggested that the group networks with the local county recorder for Botanical Society of Scotland to explore the potential.

## **RESULTS**

<b>Level</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Points</b>
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

