

Annual Report and  
Financial Statements

For the Year Ended 31<sup>st</sup> of  
December 2014

Charity Number 1145700

Hyndburn  
**Green Spaces Forum**



Entrust Number EB136023  
Charity number 1145700

Hyndburn Green Spaces Forum, 60 Rhyddings Street, Oswaldtwistle, Accrington - BB5 3EY

**Charity Name :** Hyndburn Green Spaces Forum

**Charity Registration Number:** 1145700

**Registered Office:**

60, Rhyddings Street,  
Oswaldtwistle,  
Accrington  
BB5 3EY

**Trustees:**

Mr Neil Mooney	Chair
Mr Yvonne Heap	Vice Chair
Ms Cath Holmes	Secretary
Mr Gerry Burke	Treasurer

**Authority Liaison:**

Mr Ken Moss	Portfolio Holder for Parks & Leisure
Mr Craig Haraben	Head of Parks & Cemeteries
Mrs Shirley Parkinson	Parks Liaison Officer
Mrs Alison Edmondson	Minute Secretary

**Message from the Chair,**

Welcome to our third annual report as a registered charity having been granted charity status in February 2012.

We would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge the dedication of the 100's of community volunteers affiliated to the forum who have generously contributed their time, and the generous support from the funders who have helped us to turn community dreams into reality.

A special thanks as always to Hyndburn Borough Council for their valuable support, Our Parks Liaison Officer and Minute Secretary. We would also like to wish Alison our minuite secretary a long and happy retirement, she will be sadly missed.

### The year in brief

A couple of our groups took up our offer to add their group information onto our website, enabling them to post events and activities in their region.

We continue to assess the Green Partnership Awards for Hyndburn Borough Council and Lancashire County Council.

A community assessment system that is unique within the Green Partnership Awards in Lancashire. We feel the forum provides an objective and critical mechanism while still assisting groups improve both their bid writing and the way they deliver their projects.

The forum and its member groups have been involved in a varied array of projects this year, each bringing something unique to the community it serves.

### **Our aims and objectives**

#### Purpose and vision

Our charity's purpose is set out in the objects in our constitution:

For the benefit of the inhabitants of the Borough of Hyndburn, Lancashire and the surrounding area, to ;

Provide or assist in the provision of facilities for recreation and other leisure time occupation in the interests of social welfare with the object of improving their conditions of life for the inhabitants of the area of benefit without distinction of sex, or of political, religious or other opinions in particular but not exclusively by the preservation, promotion, support, assistance and improvement of all green spaces within the Borough of Hyndburn.

Our vision is to empower our communities and promote social action, so every resident has a voice and access to free, high quality open spaces.

#### Ensuring our work delivers our aims

The forum works to a project plan approved in principle at the meetings. Proposed projects are discussed with the Head of Parks & Cemeteries to prioritise strategic need.

The community can also approach the forum for help with a project that they feel would benefit their community.

These project proposals are then reviewed by Forum members to assess community value and whether the proposed project would meet our objectives.

All projects undertaken under the Forum's umbrella are evaluated at the end of the construction phase to look at the benefits that they have brought to the community.

## **Structure, Governance and Management**

### Governing Document

The organisation is a charity established under a constitution adopted on the 18<sup>th</sup> of January 2011

### Recruitment and Appointment of Trustees

Under requirements of our constitution the trustees are elected to serve for a period of 12 months after which they must be re-elected at the next Annual General Meeting. They can put themselves forward, or be nominated; the nomination must be seconded by another forum member.

All Trustees give their time voluntarily and receive no benefits from the charity.

The Trustees in 2014 are:

Chair; Mr Neil Mooney

Vice Chair; Mrs Yvonne Heap

Secretary; Ms Cath Holmes

Treasurer; Mr Gerald Burke.

### Forum Member Group - Representatives.

Member Groups are composed entirely of volunteers from the local areas, we value the local knowledge that they bring to our charity and the hours they spend on helping us meet our aims and objectives. We recognise the importance of their roles within our charity and have nominated them for various awards.

We would also like to express our sadness in this year's report that Laneside Residents Association has been forced to close. We would like to take this opportunity to thank Jean & Malcolm Sommerville for all the work they have undertaken over the years. They have been very active members of the forum and their commitment and enthusiasm to make life better for the residents of the area is a great loss.

They can be justly proud of their legacy which includes the very popular Playgrounds at Higham Playing fields, and its protected QEII status, and Dyke Nook community gardens (which was highlighted in the 2013 report), and helping to plant 200,000 crocus across the Borough in our Blooming Lovely project. Not forgetting the numerous events they have organised which have been huge successes.

Each member group can appoint two representatives to attend the monthly forum meetings on behalf of their organisation.

Each member group is entitled to one vote on any issue, project submission or funding application approval.

Each affiliated member group must be a community not for profit organisation, legally constituted with their own constitution and bank account. Member groups can choose to adopt the Forum policies (Health & Safety, Child Protection etc.).

### **How our activities deliver public benefit**

All our charitable activities focus on engaging with the 81,000 residents of Hyndburn inspiring them to take a more active role / ownership of the open space and leisure facilities within their community.

We use Parks and Recreational activities as the mechanism for delivering the following social benefits.

*Increase Physical Activity – improved community health by:*

- Providing freely accessible play/sports facilities of a good quality.(will be based on the 3 Free's – Free of charge – Free to come and go - Free to choose
- Providing opportunities to take part in practical environmental events.
- Encourage community food growing projects.

*Increased Biodiversity & Access to Nature - improved environmental understanding and its links to well-being by:*

- Improving access for everyone to some of Hyndburn's green spaces.
- Creating learning opportunities for residents to get close to and learn about nature.
- Improving biodiversity within the Borough to attract more wildlife to its parks & open spaces.
- Providing training and workshops to undertake wildlife surveys.

*Improved Community Cohesion – Improving family and community relationships by:*

- Providing free opportunities which allow differing communities to connect and interact with each other around a positive similar aim.
- Good quality, open space and free leisure facilities enables the most vulnerable families to spend quality time together.
- Encouraging all to value and appreciate others views whilst creating strong positive friendships, work practices and forming interest clubs, event days and sharing this within our Borough and beyond.

*Capacity building within the community - Improved skills and community ownership by*

- *Giving residents the confidence that they can make a difference within their community.*
- *Providing a mechanism for residents to have a voice.*
- *Including opportunities to learn new life skills.*

The Charity is continuing to seek funding to improve the following facilities:

- To improve the play facilities for teenagers at Milnshaw Park, in partnership with the Friends of Milnshaw Park.
- To replace the Bowling and Tennis Pavilion at Lowerfold Park, with a new community building, in partnership with Totally Tennis and Great Harwood Bowling Club.
- Assist Friends of Rhyddings Park in their bid to the Heritage Lottery Parks for People program.
- Assist the Friends of Memorial Park in their plans to improve Memorial Park war memorial and grounds.
- To create a walled garden of remembrance at Accrington Cemetery.
- To increase the amount of community engagement within parks by the appointment of two community engagement officers.
- Improve the play area at Bullough Park.
- Provide an outdoor gym at Mercer Park.
- Improve access to woodlands within Woodnook Vale Bullough Park area.
- Provide a multi-use games area and playground improvements to the Huncoat area.
- Provide a visitors centre for Peel Park.

**Once again our activities have been varied within the community**

**TATTON SHOW by Cath Holmes**

RHS Tatton Flower Show 2014

Following on the success of 2013, the first year of entering the Show; the Hyndburn Federation of Allotments we're welcomed back by the RHS and this time in their own right. Our theme was World on Your Plot. It became apparent after 2013, that much of the food we eat isn't actually native to Britain and comes from all corners of the world



Volunteers from Baxenden Allotments & Gardens Society, Church Prospects Panel, Clayton le Moors Prospects Panel, HFA, Incredible Edibles Accrington, National Veg Society Lancashire DA, Sandy Lane Gardening Group; all worked together in growing

edibles; obtaining sponsorship, putting the display together, attending each show day and then dismantling the display.

Thanks to Gerry Burke, SLGG; the display featured a potting shed with sedum roof very kindly sponsored by Lancashire Summerhouses. There was an orangery sponsored by Palram Applications. Our lovely friends, Pat and Ian from Link-a-board kindly sponsored additional raised beds to fill a much larger area than in 2013. The RHS also sponsored the display.



We had our very own marquee to display information about the various volunteer groups, interact with visitors by planting seeds or seedlings which had been donated by Kings Seeds; making bags from recycled paper and string. At the entrance to the display stood a map of the world with magnetic photos of edibles which visitors were challenged to associate with the continent they were from.

We had a constant stream of visitors – the Mayor Councillor Munsif Dad, Council Leader Miles Parkinson, Head of Parks Craig Haraben; all came to see us on VIP day; lots of friends and family, a couple of celebrities from Emmerdale and Coronation Street, Pat and Ian from Link-a-board. Interviews by the RHS, a local radio station, Good Morning Britain. A representative from Unwins seeds called by. And Mr Veg himself, the great Medwyn Williams and his wife, Gwenda; who were also exhibiting in the grand floral marquee came down for a chat and camp.

During the Show we were approached by a greenhouse company asking if they could put a greenhouse on our site next year, an alarm company asked how they could sponsor; Pennard Plants gave us masses of plants after dismantling their fantastic display.

In all, it was a very successful event, gaining the volunteers a “Highly Commended” from the RHS and a welcome back in 2015.

None of this success would be possible without the support of Hyndburn Council Parks Department who transport all the plants and equipment there and back for us. The biggest of “ thank you ” goes to them.

### **Hyndburn Federation of Allotments**

The group was set up in January 2012 as a protest against Hyndburn Council proposing to massively increase allotment rents. The Council Chambers were overflowing with angry allotment holders at the Council meeting. Soon afterwards over 100 attended a meeting organised by Baxenden Allotments & Gardens Society.



Since then “things have moved on” and a very good working relationship developed with the Council’s Allotments Manager, Ian Marfleet and Cllr Ken Moss, who is current Portfolio Holder for Education, Leisure and Arts. A lot of hard work has been carried out by Ian in reducing water bills, water bills being produced on a site by site basis, bringing previously un-let able allotments back into use, splitting very large plots into smaller and more manageable ones, improving pathways, ensuring plots are used for allotment purposes and not for cheap caravan or building material storage.

In early 2014, the Council re-issued and updated the Allotment Rules and Guidelines; partially in a response to the numerous and varied complaints received and some misunderstanding of what the Council were or were not responsible for on allotments. This brought much debate, some miscommunications; resulting in an overview and scrutiny meeting to which the HFA and National Allotments & Leisure Gardens Ltd were invited to represent the allotment holders feedback and queries.



Numerous issues were clarified and ironed out. As a result, some of the Rules & Guidelines were slightly amended. They reiterate much of what is in the Allotment Act and are in line with many of Hyndburn’s neighbouring local authority Rules and Guidelines.

A new tenancy agreement was introduced to bring in line all tenancy agreements as there have been quite a view editions and variations over the years.

The HFA are used as a consulting body across the 21 allotment sites in Hyndburn – rent increase, water charges, water saving scheme, allotment development and recently proposals for allotment holders to opt out of using mains water on site and for new tenants to pay a tenancy bond as an incentive for them to leave the plot in a reasonably tidy and rubbish free state should they give up their allotment. Currently either the Council or the incoming tenant end up paying to clear an allotment.



The HFA have been the lead group in 2013, 2014 and for 2015 in putting on an allotment type display at RHS Tatton Flower Show, bringing together various Hyndburn voluntary groups. The groups have received tremendous support from Hyndburn Councils' Parks Department and the Allotments Manager, together with generous sponsorship, which has developed further for 2015.

The HFA group meet bi-monthly and welcome any allotment holder along.

### **Sandy Lane Gardening Group (SLGG)**

**We were delighted when Sandy Lane Gardening Group, which our treasurer represents, was made a recipient of the Queen's Award for Voluntary Service, very well deserved.**

Two members of SLGG went to a Buckingham Palace Royal Garden Party in June. In July a presentation by the Lord-Lieutenant of Lancashire was made at County Hall, Preston when the group received a glass crystal and a certificate personally signed by the Queen.

Gerry said that without the involvement of the gardening group with the forum this award would never have happened. Being part of the forum has given us purposeful activities, social inclusion and a real feeling of being a valued part of our local community.

Gerry calculated that the reductions in rehospitalisation of the group members save the NHS approx. £250,000 per year.



### **LOWERFOLD PARK CELEBRATES 100 YEARS**

Lowerfold Park celebrated 100 years as a public park with a new commemorative gate.

After community consultation it was decided that a replacement side gate for one that had become uneconomical to repair would make a fitting commemorative addition to the parks infrastructure. Three designs were produced by Hyndburn Borough Council's parks team these were then shown to children from St Bartholomew's primary school which borders the park to choose the winning design. In true resourceful forum fashion the centre panel was left over from a recent fencing project.

The project was made possible thanks to the generous support of Great Harwood Area council.



## Incredible Edibles Accrington (IEA)



A group formed approximately 2010, when a public meeting was held in Accrington. Incredible Edibles is a national and international edible movement which started in Todmorden. The aim is to increase the amount of local food and eaten in towns by growing in public places – railway station, public park, town centre municipal beds – free food for anyone to enjoy.

IEA created raised beds on Accrington Railway Station some years ago and they are well used by commuters. There is an orchard in Oak Hill Park which was planted in 2014, together with raised beds which are disabled accessible. There are fruit bushes, herbs, vegetables.



IEA have grown edibles to donate to other groups or public spaces – Dyke Nook Gardens being one. It was thanks to Laneside Resident's Association involvement with Dyke Nook that one door led to another opening.

Back in mid 2013, BBC Radio Lancashire broadcast 2 live events from the site and BBC NW also filmed. This led to

them wanting to feature IEA and they did several hours filming in Accrington and at Tatton during the build up, for a feature broadcast after a live link with BBC NW Tonight News from the



allotment garden we were involved with at RHS Tatton Flower Show.

In 2014, IEA had a presence at Southport Flower Show by volunteering with the National Vegetable Society, Lancashire DA. Our beans, cucamelon and achocha were proudly on display, which won Large Gold (again). The cucamelon and achocha attracted a lot of comment and interest which was great.

In Oak Hill Park volunteers have undertaken clean ups of the rock garden pools and pond, repaired the pools so that they no longer leak. The rock gardens are listed and due to the leaking, the pump had to be turned off. It was immensely satisfying to repair them and see them flowing again.



Cath Holmes, Chair of IE Accrington; attended by invitation, Medwyn William's Masterclass Seminar Weekend in the wonderful Llanberis Valley. One of the other delegates asked if IE was a company then? Cath explained the concept of what it was all about – the person clearly didn't understand nor the concept of free food, which left a puzzled look on their face.



IEA were involved again with RHS Tatton in 2014 and will be joining the other Hyndburn voluntary groups in 2015 to put on another allotment display there.

Thanks to Hyndburn Council Parks Department, IEA now have a permanent base to work from – a very large poly tunnel which is shared with Sandy Lane Gardening Group. Gardening in Incredible Edibles is a truly family event and bridges the generation gap.



## **Financial Information**

### Principal Funding Sources

Funding secured by the forum is usually project specific. Our day to day operational costs are currently at zero thanks to the generosity of the trustees who do not take any payment from the charity and the generous support from Hyndburn Borough Council in the form of a free room for meetings or training courses, secretarial minute support, photocopying. The forum also tries to be as paper free as possible corresponding where possible electronically. This allows us to use every penny raised by the forum to meet our aims and objectives.

Funding for this year's project has been made possible thanks to the generous support of The Lancashire Environmental Fund, Biffa Awards, Great Harwood Area Council and Hyndburn Borough Council.

### **The Future**

The forum celebrates its 10<sup>th</sup> birthday on the 5<sup>th</sup> May 2015, and has a lot to be proud of. Its grassroots way of working has gone from strength to strength.

- The forum has increased from 5 member groups to 25
- Gained Environmental Body Status – registered with Entrust .
- In 2010/2011 took over as the grants approval panel for Lancashire County Council - Green Partnership Awards for Hyndburn. (The community deciding on community funding)
- In 2011 Received a Green Apple Gold Award for its work on transforming a public park to Green Flag status
- Nominated for the Mayor of Hyndburn Environmental Awards – coming second.
- In 2012 gained charity status
- Has helped to raise £ 1.8 million in external funding for community projects since 2005, which has all been spent on capital projects across the Borough.
- HGPF priority plan from 2005 to 2012 was to work with the authority and residents to improve the quality of children's play facilities across the Borough. The results speak for themselves with 6 playgrounds having been refurbished and 7 new playgrounds having been installed, benefiting over 25,000 young people under the age of 19 yrs per year.
- Six Hyndburn Parks and one cemetery now have Green Flag Status.
- Community planted with volunteers 200,000 Crocus bulbs across the Borough, providing colour within the town and an early nectar source for bees.
- Organised and ran the Centenary celebrations for Peel Park.

With partnership support the following individual member groups have achieved the following recognition.

Baxenden Community Forum won the Lancashire Environmental Fund – Community Sustainability Award.

Clayton le Moors with Altham Prospects Panel has won the RFS- Excellence in Forestry Community Award.

Laneside Residents Association has won the RHS & Radio Lancashire Community green competition.

As the capital investment and infrastructure work within parks and open spaces has increased the quality and number of free leisure facilities, the forum looks to the future and asks what its role will be in the next 10 years. Although some parks don't yet have green flag quality status, work is on-going to bring these sites to that standard over the next few years.

Community consultation has brought to the fore that the greatest perceived barriers to use are that the parks offers nothing for residents to do in them. The forum has also learnt that no community engagement has taken place in parks for several years unless it has been an event or an activity organised by them or one of their member groups due to the loss of both Arts and Sports Development Officers.

The charity will continue to work with the Young Peoples Service, Hyndburn Youth Council, Community Safety partnership, Lancashire Wildlife Trust, Newground, Hyndburn 55 forum and other multi-agency organisations to help deliver on local priorities and deliver the best possible outcomes for our community.

We will continue to;

- Work with member groups and partners on improving the Borough's Biodiversity and wildlife habitats.
- Increase the level of community engagement taking place within Parks and Open Spaces, through increased events and activities.
- We will continue to work with the community and local authority to improve the remaining parks to Green Flag standard.