

Green fingers invited to care for New Mills allotment

Green fingered High Peak residents are being invited to help tend to an allotment in New Mills.

Dedicated volunteers from New Mills and District Volunteer Centre have tended to the plot at the back of Ollersett Avenue for around four years, when Tarry Hill Care Home gave up the lease.

Volunteer, Jenny Bryant said: "At first it was quite overgrown with no hard paths and no substantial beds but thanks to Lottery Funding and with the help of a few 'strong' men, wood was purchased and the raised beds now in situ were built. The soil was purchased and deposited at the entrance to the allotment site and, with the assistance of some lads from the Community Service, approximately 10 tonnes was moved by wheel barrow into the raised beds.

"We then managed to source the extremely heavy paving slabs which we manhandled from Ollersett Avenue into the allotment site and laid between the wooden beds. It was hard work all round but very worthwhile as now the plot is a lot more accessible."

Her husband, Tony added: "Over the last few years we have grown a variety of fruit and vegetables which originally were donated to the food bank in Buxton. However, now most of the produce is either offered for donation at the centre or used by Lorna Young who runs the Friday Lunch Club.

"We mainly grow things that can be kept for a few days without deteriorating such as carrots, swede, potatoes, onions and the like but also some salad crops and a lot of runner beans. Fruit-wise we have rhubarb, gooseberries, blackcurrants and, this year, a new redcurrant bush. Some of this fruit has been used to make jam which is then used within the centre."

As well as Jenny and Tony, there are only two other people who regularly help out on the plot: Helen Greenhough and her carer, Kevin Thurston.

Jenny commented: "It is lovely to see Helen enjoy the work; she seems to have really taken to it. We try to meet up every Thursday during the growing season but the rest of the work, including watering, weeding and picking the crops is done by Tony and I. If it's raining on a Thursday there is always the offer to meet up in one of New Mills' local cafes for a coffee and a chin wag. It would be lovely to have more people who enjoy gardening and want to get involved. Help is always gratefully received especially when it comes to weeding and watering and, when the beans start to be ready they require picking almost daily."

Helen said: "It gives me exercise and confidence, I also like strawberries and we have planted some for this season - yummy. Last season we had lots of potatoes."

To find out more about volunteering at the volunteer centre allotment, contact Lorna Young, Marketing & Group Coordinator, on 01663 744196 or email: lorna@nmvc.org.