

Project Number : I2 Carbon Skills



Project Overview: The Carbon Skills training programme will deliver two strands of training needs, 'organisational' and 'practical', for community members, volunteers, staff and partner organisations. This training will build on, and complement workshops trialled in the development stage within the Carbon Landscape area, and it will involve community members and partners in shaping the type of training offered.

Project lead organisation and other organisations involved: Carbon Landscape project team

Project Location: Across the Carbon Landscape

Project dates: July 2017 – April 2022

Project Outputs

Measure	Target	Delivered	Notes
200 people trained per annum. ~ 1,000 in total	1,000	2030	Easily achieved through regular workshops and Zoom workshop delivery
20 different training courses and activities per year ~ 100	100	120	
40 people mentored to deliver community led events	40	59	
1 training network maintained to contribute to resources	1	1	
Additional outputs delivered			
Anything unexpected or additional outputs!			Programme team ended up doing a lot of the delivery because the training was so bespoke that it became difficult to get in outside contractors. The training also had to go online from 2020 because of the pandemic.
		66 AQA Certificates	The programme team did not appreciate how powerful these would be for motivating trainees, placements, volunteers and the general public.

Reflecting on the last 5 years, what's the one thing that you're most proud of that has come from your project being part of the Carbon Landscape?

Carbon Skills is a real success story. The wide and varied subjects covered worked well, as did the digital delivery that we were forced into through lockdown. This meant we were able to deliver something (at the height of the pandemic) every week and then, when in person conservation volunteering could restart, once a fortnight with our "Monday night inspirational zooms". The sheer number of training opportunities, tailored to the needs of formal partners and local communities, is an exemplar for Landscape Scale Partnerships. We have managed to offer over two thousand opportunities (double the target) earning people certificates and proof of learning and ability to take with them on their vocational journey providing critical skills. For partners, this means they have access to a highly skilled volunteer resource. The cumulative effect of this is an effective force to tackle the twin threats of climate harm and biodiversity loss.

What difference has this project made to the cultural and natural heritage of Carbon Landscape?

The main difference is the empowerment of volunteers to continue and knowledgeably contribute to the conservation and restoration of the Carbon Landscape. The programme team have also been on a journey of how to create the best learning experiences and came up with the three-tier system. (This also links to Volunteering).

1. Entry Level – stand-alone sessions linked to requests from the local community examples are not solely around landscape restoration but include the community side e.g. how to run an event, willow skills to set up a willow coppice for fundraising. Sometimes attendees were motivated by gaining an AQA Entry Level certificate but more than often they just wanted to get involved because they were interested in the subject matter.
2. Landscape champion training – this would involve some form of mentoring commitment from the individual and AQA Leading a Group and AQA Leading a Guided Walk were particularly important.
3. "Tickets" style training – this was only available to those volunteers who had shown dedication and connection to a restoration project. This is partly because the training is relatively expensive but critical to volunteer management of the Carbon Landscape. Example of these include Outdoor First Aid at Work and Brushcutter Training.

Landscape Champions knowledge goes beyond the Heritage Lottery Funded period

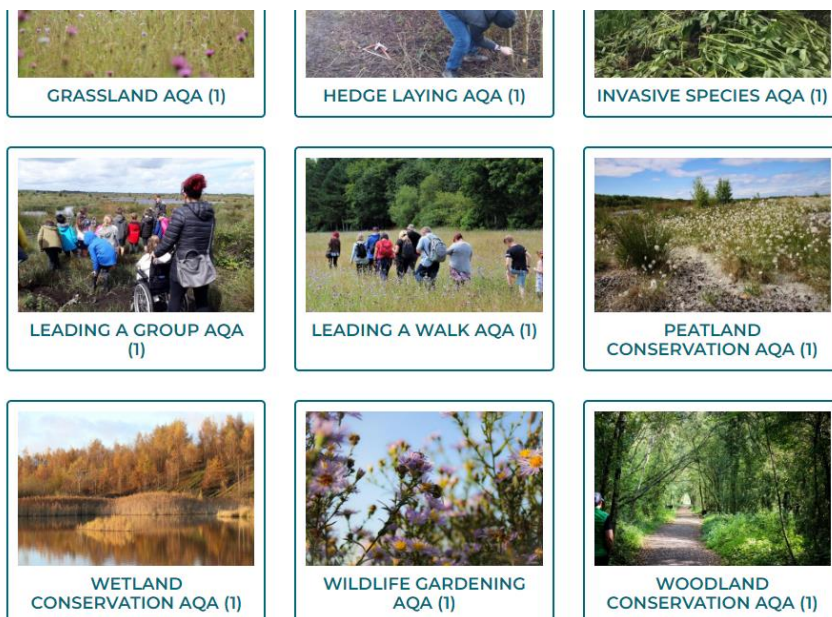
One of the interesting aspects of the Friends groups of the Carbon Landscape is that we have people who often have retired who were professional and at the top of their game. Within our Friends we have two PhD doctors, two GPs, one director of a council, one head of the Fire Service, a Headmistress and multiple elected councillors. They appreciate when work is presented to them at their level. For engaging with them it has been useful to run the AQA Unit Awards and get really technical about the restoration of the Character Areas and that information has been imparted by Guided Tours on Site, Training Days (in person and on zoom) and via in person conferences.

Subjects covered include Theory of Landscape Scale Restoration, Rewetting a large moss, Creating Mini-mosses, From Poor to Species Rich Grasslands, theory of rotation wetlands, sphagnum

farming and reintroduction of bog species, willow tit habitat creation. Feedback from the first conference included twenty three people approving of the “scientific explanations and calibre of the speakers”. Comments included "Loved learning the science behind restoration", "Thought provoking and insightful" and "Explanations as to why we do the practical stuff."

What difference has this project made to people?

www.carbonlandscape.org.uk/resources/community-volunteers/volunteering/aqas



In person AQAs (pre pandemic) and Monday Night Fortnightly inspirational zooms

The Carbon Skills has been also about first time experiences through the use of Entry Level AQA Courses and the Carbon Landscape programme team had to become AQA Centre Coordinators to enable this. They also went onto mentor other staff within Lancashire Wildlife Trust to do this work.

Accredited Qualification Association (AQA) is an examination body which, amongst other things, certifies entry level course for more practical based activities. It's a great way for people to develop hands on skills and build their knowledge whilst building their CVs. Most courses involve a short classroom-based activity and then up to 30 hours of practical activity to demonstrate the theory. Courses have been run on over 20 subjects including Peatland Conservation, Wildlife Surveying, Use of Hand Tools, Leading a group and many more. These courses are really popular and everything is relevant to the work we do within the Carbon Landscape.

“I think because the course runs over more than one session, it's a great opportunity to be able to achieve a very useful qualification that can be paced accordingly and have thoroughly enjoyed it!”

Theory sessions feedback

- Great content, very concise, gave good overall picture
- Good PowerPoint presentation – informative – good use of notes – good order and was clear – great photos/pictures/diagrams.

- Very good presentation.
- Have a bit more confidence. What you shared was super interesting.

Practical sessions

“It was very much encouraged that everyone get stuck in and give it a go – learning as we were going along. That worked for me because I had never done it before.” Hedgelaying Workshop Attendee

“Very informative, non-threatening, really useful” Hand Tools Workshop Attendee

“I am currently undertaking an AQA in peatland conservation and have so far found it very helpful in bringing together the experience and knowledge gained during my time volunteering. I particularly enjoyed the fact that to learn some of the skills I had to visit new sites - it was very interesting to see and compare mosslands at various stages.”

The biggest impact is the empowerment of our volunteers to get involved more and receive the rewards and recognition that they deserve. Many of our volunteers have gone on to employment in this sector, partially through the training they received through Carbon Skills.

Landscape Champion David Nowell (who has been with the project throughout the five years) and was extremely supportive when the project had to go online learning because of the pandemic. He has been critical to suggesting subjects to running the Inspiration Monday night zooms on and through a process of co-production scoping content for these.

“Often highly informative. Good opportunities for people to meet who would not have done otherwise such as academics and community volunteers allowing issues to be discussed over a broader perspective. The practical workshops on habitat maintenance were particularly useful for volunteers with limited mobility who could use the skills taught at a level practical to themselves.”

Useful Links

www.carbonlandscape.org.uk/resources/community-volunteers/volunteering/agas

All the technical training and talks are on the Carbon Landscape youtube channel

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCqcs9TX5I3Au0TD0QcTBzLw>

Future Plans and Legacy

There is a digital footprint as a legacy of Carbon Skills. That means that people can continue to dip in after the Heritage Lottery funded period. The skills that have been imparted during the project are the legacy. Most of those benefitting from the training have expressed their desire to continue using it for the restoration and management of their green spaces. Several community groups are continuing with the organisation of their own workshops and bioblitzes.

Lessons learned?

The main feedback we have had is that we could have done this earlier, or even expanded the scope of it, with our later return to in person workshops also incorporating a digital element – i.e. live streaming mammal trapping sessions.

The evolution of the project especially to the three-tier system and the use of AQA Unit Awards is valuable lesson for all Landscape Scale Partnerships.

Photographic Evidence



Hedgelaying at Moss Brook Farm



Mentoring Community Members on Running Events



(c)Steve Tomlin Crafts - Scything training



Peat Land Conservation Workshop Practical

Funding Partners

