

## Project Number : I3 Carbon Trainees



**Project Overview:** Carbon Landscape Trainees project offers unemployed people the opportunity to learn traditional heritage and conservation management skills whilst undertaking a traineeship in Environment Conservation. Together with volunteers, they will work alongside, and gain knowledge from, a variety of experts from across the Partnership.

**Project lead organisation and other organisations involved:** Lancashire Wildlife Trust

**Project Location:** Across the Carbon Landscape

**Project dates:** July 2017 – April 2020

## Project Outputs

Measure	Target	Delivered	Notes
9 trainees employed, 3 per year for 3 years	9	10	
100% success rate of trainees gaining employment	100%	100 %	
75 Ha of land improved	75ha	130.703 ha	
250 people benefiting from the projects supported by Trainees	250	440	
170 trained through knowledge sharing workshops	170	191	
1 report on the ecosystem services delivered by the Trainees	1	1	
<b>Additional outputs delivered</b>			
Income generated by trainees		£17,228.97	

**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?**

Enabling ten individuals to kickstart their career in nature conservation is incredibly special whilst at the same time smashing the initial outputs of the project. Thanks to the income generated by the early trainees we were able to employ an additional trainee and extend the time trainees were

with us from 9 months to 12 months. This really helped the trainees to gain more experience and there was an overlap as new trainees started who could be peer mentored by each other. As the Carbon Landscape partnership was so ambitious, with its 22 projects, it helped to have the trainees throughout the year. Trainees went on to work for Natural England, Lancashire Wildlife Trust (5), Mersey Rivers Trust, Groundwork Trust, RSPB and a land-based project in Scotland and some of them went straight in at manager level.

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

The trainees were able to carry out habitat conservation connecting over 130 ha throughout the Carbon Landscape. This included planting bog species on Little Woolden, creating footpaths next to Pestfurlong Moss and cutting reeds at Wigan Flashes. As they worked alongside volunteers, they were the stalwarts for getting huge amount of physical graft done. With Aim 2 – they engaged with 631 people through workshops that they initially shadowed experienced members of the team and then were expected to run them within a short space of time. Aim 1 and 2 of the programme could not have reached so many local people without this devolved structure.

The trainees literally turned their hands to everything and were regularly pushed outside their comfort zones. They also formed strong friendships and allyships. Not all of them were fresh out of university as some had made career changes later in life. This brought a wealth of lived experience.

The standout aspects for nature were the trainees organising Wildlife ID Skills Workshops on various sites across the Carbon Landscape and the supporting of many events at the Gateways sites. The portfolio projects were incredibly important for new understanding in nature and included nationally important work around bog bush crickets, green bridges and a management plan for a new stepping-stone site at Whitehead Hall Meadows. It is not hard to see why their employability went through the roof!

## What difference has this project made to people?

This project had a profound effect to the ten trainees themselves. Most of the trainees were local to the Carbon Landscape and so to take local individuals and support them on their first steps in their career made a massive difference!

Do you feel this traineeship has been useful? – *“Yes, definitely” “Absolutely.” “Incredibly so”*

Do you feel this has helped your career? – *“Yes, for all the reasons listed above and because it has boosted my confidence that I would be able to carry out a role, even if I have to learn some skills on the job. I was also able to get advice from other team members and improve my job applications.”*

*“It has helped, as a part of the bigger journey I have been on. My voluntary experience is definitely needed to support what I have achieved on the placement but being involved with a project from the start and understanding partnerships will definitely help me in the future.”*

*“Most definitely. I can assure you, if it weren’t for the Carbon Landscape traineeship I would be going into my next job at Natural England.”*

Along with making a difference for the trainees the trainees also made a difference for local people too. They were able to train 191 people through knowledge sharing workshops and engage with 440 people through other projects within the Carbon Landscape like Events and Volunteering sessions.

## Useful Links

<https://carbonlandscapetrainees.wordpress.com/> The trainees maintained a blog. You can learn a little bit more about each of the trainees and why they joined the project and about their aspirations.

<https://www.facebook.com/CarbonLandscapeTrainees> The trainees also maintained their own Facebook page to inspire and showcase their impact.

## Future Plans and Legacy

This traineeship programme really helped to highlight the benefit of having trainees on projects of this size. They were able to support so many of the longer-term behavioural change outcomes. They were also able to bring in over £17,000 (reflected in other projects of the Carbon Landscape notably Carbon Connections and Sense of Place) of match which helped to extend projects, allow us to take on another trainee, carry out more habitat conservation and allow them to expand their training budget.

Overall, trainees are critical to successful Landscape Scale Partnerships. The personal projects have gone onto inform further projects within the Lancashire Wildlife Trust and in the wider partnership. They are available to view on the resource centre of the website and prove that even people who are the start of their career, if they are passionate and willing can bring a lot to the understanding of nature conservation and relevance for local people.

## Lessons learned?

One of the main success of the traineeships was the creation of portfolios. This really helped the trainees to focus on the skills and experience they needed for their career aspirations. Being able to reflect on the work you carried out and have a reminder of this to use for interviews was really helpful. Similarly, regular one-to-ones and catch ups were also helpful. This allowed the trainees to feedback and become goal orientated.

Originally, the traineeships were only programmed to last 9 months. In the future, a 1-year traineeship would be highly more effective for both the individual and the project.

The one thing that would be more beneficial if carried out again was to have the trainees start at a slightly later date. The first round of trainees began within weeks of the programme team which

meant that both teams were learning the project at the same time and the programme team felt that they had to regularly apologise as they were still trying to strategise.

## Photographic Evidence



Picture of all the trainees throughout the years.



Mike carrying out reed cuts on Wigan Flashes to support the Fenscape Project.



Andy during his Brushcutter Training Course.



Emma running an event to support the Connections Project on Low Hall. Here the children are making Seed Bombs to take home.

## Funding Partners

