



# Courses for Forces

Funded by: Armed Forces Community Covenant Grant

## Grant details

“This project will provide the learning opportunities, training, work experience and personal development opportunities for former- service personnel (Reference: Forces in Mind Trust August 2013 “*A good transition is one that enables ex-service personnel to be sufficiently resilient to adjust successfully to civilian life, both now and in the future. This resilience includes financial, psychological, and emotional resilience, and encompasses the ex-service person and their immediate families*”) combined with supporting vulnerable and disadvantaged young people on structured training programmes within our own Community Woodland, and on partner sites near Moretonhampstead, Devon.

The project will train ex-service personnel as Volunteer Leaders who will then lead small groups of vulnerable and disengaged young people through 6 week courses in Rural Skills; Green Woodworking and the creation of a new Community Garden (horticulture).

The former-Service Leaders will be fully supported by our Tutors throughout the process; themselves learning new and transferable rural skills during a 4 week induction programme including woodland management, forestry, green woodworking and horticulture. Along with their training and work experience they will obtain Accredited qualifications to support their transition to civilian and employment & self-employment life.

The young people participating on these projects will come from a variety of backgrounds, all considered to be vulnerable and disengaged including truanting or at risk of being excluded, learning, mental health or physical disabilities, and young offenders including Grant 18 “*before I started running deer i was always getting in trouble with the police and at one point i even ran away from home. When the police caught me I was referred to Running Deer.*” We will provide them with opportunities to learn new practical skills in a holistic environment which will also work to improve their self-esteem, team building, communication skills which will have a positive impact on their lives.”

**The project included:**

- 6 x 6 rural skills courses over the 12 months;
- 8 Empowerment Days; - 2 in Spring, 2 in Summer, 2 in Autumn, 2 in Winter
- 3 Family Days
- 9 Bushcraft Leadership Training Days – one per month

**Rural Skills:** The Rural Skills tutors delivered this element of the project including:

- Health and safety/ Risk assessments. PPE and responsibilities.
- Tool use and maintenance.
- Woodland management – Conservation, coppicing and other techniques.
- Hedge Laying (Winter)
- Hurdle making – Traditional methods and techniques
- Charcoal making
- Waterway management – Conservation and restoration.
- Agri-forestry and small tree felling
- Introduction to Heavy Horses used in a forestry setting; ie horse logging and will include:
  - Health and safety/ Risk assessments. PPE and responsibilities including H&S of horse
  - horse care,
  - tack and harness,
  - long reining
  - logging equipment

**Green Woodworking:** The Green Woodworking Tutor delivered this element of the project which included:

- Health and safety/ Risk assessments. PPE and responsibilities.
- Tool use and maintenance.
- Greenwood working – Using un-seasoned wood for a variety of projects.
- Making rustic furniture
- Pole Lathe and Shave Horse
- Fencing
- Furniture making
- Steam Bending
- Making utensils

**Horticulture:** The horticulture tutor worked with the groups on a project to create a community garden within Butterdon Wood. This element covered all aspects of horticulture including:

- Health and Safety and responsibilities
- Hand tool use and maintenance
- Prepare the ground, beds and pots for sowing or planting

- Plant and pot up container grown subjects, rooted cuttings, seedlings and plugs
- Prepare and maintain soils and use organic mulch's
- Water beds, borders and areas of plants in containers
- Sow seeds outdoors in drills and indoors in containers
- Propagate by stem and leaf cuttings
- Identify plants, weeds and pests
- Harvest the usable parts of plants, preparing them for sale and use
- Herb Crafts – including dyeing wool tops from herbs and wild flowers

### **Bushcraft Instructor Training**

Weekend courses for former-service personnel introduce them to Bushcraft and Instructor training.

- Basic: fire, water, shelter, natural cordage & knots, cutting tools (safe knife and saw use and tool maintenance) (techniques, health & safety, teaching techniques, plans and equipment)
- Intermediate - navigation, plant and tree ID, campcraft, nature awareness, basic greenwood carving safe axe use, health & safety, teaching techniques and plans and equipment)
- Advanced - foraging, natural navigation, tracking, advanced greenwood ie: bowmaking, flint knapping, traps and snares, advanced campcraft techniques

This training placed participants in a good position to find out if this was what they wanted to do; and signposted them to qualifications that they would need to pursue in order to become Bushcraft Instructors.

### **Empowerment Days**

Working with organisations such as Surf Action these Empowerment Days these were designed as Taster Days to the project. They introduced former service personnel to rural skills, green woodworking, working with Heavy Horses and Bushcraft. These sessions also explored creativity, delegating, negotiating, listening, team work, building morale, assertiveness, trust, leadership, planning and humour.

### **Training and Accreditation:**

- Chainsaw Certificate – chainsaw maintenance, small tree, crosscut and fell;
- First Aid Certificate in the workplace (3) with forestry
- In-house certificate of completion







