

Interim Report on Volunteer Project Based at Culmore nr Sandhead

The recruitment of volunteers started in October 2009 and continued into November by which time we had 13 attendees. The mentors registered these volunteers onto the Lantra recording system and undertook the initial interviews and induction process. Unfortunately no females came forward as volunteers despite the mentors best efforts to recruit young women. I have detailed the names and addresses and duration of attendance as an attachment. One lad left to take up a labouring job having obtained this after our recommendation and he is now working for the firm as an apprentice joiner having demonstrated his work ethic to his employers.

The initial Manual handling, tool maintenance and most importantly risk assessment was carried out for all volunteers by their second week in post.

The variety of work carried out by the lads varied from brashing, weeding, tree planting, tree enclosures, path maintenance, path bridge renewal, strimming to more recently some of the lads working on path creation using small diggers, dumpers and powered rollers within a training programme. (I have attached some evidence of the work they have been involved in as appendices).

The volunteers received their 200 hour Millenium awards signed by the First Minister at an award ceremony in Ayr which is an award to celebrate young peoples volunteering commitment. We also have one nomination for a "Voscar" (volunteer oscar" which is also attached.

I have attached a couple of letters and a magazine article to demonstrate the high standard of work that is being carried out by the volunteers and the type of tasks they are carrying out. These being both environmental and community projects.

One of the major blocks of work undertaken by the volunteers was the tasks associated with the creation of the Stranraer Town Wood. The volunteers undertook to plant a selection of broadleaved trees and some of the lads took to this extremely well and within their first week were planting 1200 trees per day each. It was very noticeable that as the volunteers continued on the project their fitness and their work ethic developed and with these their self-esteem.

The lads selected for the path construction work were judged on not only their attendance record but on their attitude to work and also the supervisors' perception of their ability to absorb the instruction on machinery along with their attitude to safety. The practical experience as part of this training was to construct a path network on the Stranraer Town Wood area using mini-diggers, wheeled and tracked dumpers and small rollers. To achieve a certificate of competence on each of these machines requires a written test paper and an observed and scored piece of work to ensure both safety and practical ability. All four lads not only achieved their certificates but also built over 6Kms of path to a high standard. Already I have one local firm of house builders looking to interview the lads as their reputation becomes known.

It is to be hoped that these lads get work using their skills because they worked really hard to achieve their qualifications. When they were asked to make maximum use of the trainer and consolidation on offer they readily volunteered not to work their

profile hours as volunteers i.e. 32 including travel time. What they agreed to work was 8.00 to 5.00 on site which meant in the case of the lad from Newton Stewart his 32 hours became 50 hours including travelling.

As the end of their volunteering year nears the mentors are collating the information on each of the lads performance and achievements and feeding this into the Lantra recording system. This will allow an achievement passport to be created and this will form the basis of an individual CV for each lad with the intention of improving their employment opportunities along with the recommendations from the FC team.