

Employer Services Newsletter

Welcome to the third edition of our quarterly newsletter, which centres on how we strive to ensure our programmes reflect industry needs.

Apprenticeships are one of the Government's flagship training programmes, and money continues to be invested in them despite the economic climate. Employers may be put off from embracing the programme because of questions such as:

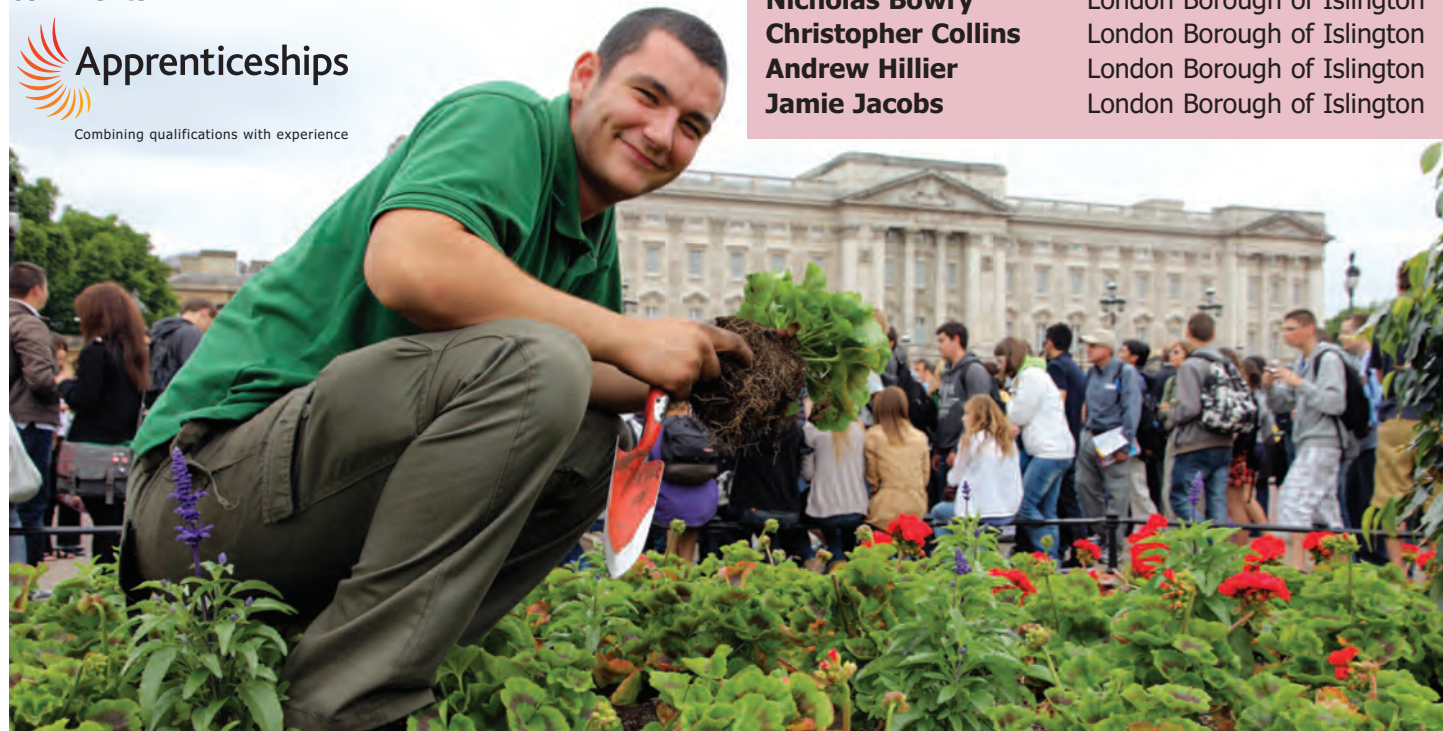
- How do I recruit an apprentice?
- How do I know that the programme is relevant to my business needs?
- What about all the paperwork?
- Will it be a cost-effective investment?
- How much support do I get from the college?

Hopefully this edition provides the answers and also goes some way to allaying these commonly-held fears. Our apprenticeship programmes have continued to grow and employers come back year after year as many believe that the combination of college-led teaching with practical experience within the workplace provides the best balance for new employees.

Linda Hope

Employer Services Manager

The newsletter is a new venture for the college and we would like to make it as informative as possible for employers, so we welcome feedback as to how it can be improved. Please email me at linda.hope@capel.ac.uk with your suggestions and comments.



Congratulations to the following students who have passed their Amenity Horticulture Apprenticeship:

Laurence Groves	London Borough of Sutton
James Hawkes	London Borough of Merton
Zoltan Herczeg	London Borough of Sutton
Mark Jolley	London Borough of Merton
Christopher Lovelock	London Borough of Merton
Peter Mills	London Borough of Merton
Daniel Perrin	London Borough of Merton
Nathan Rea	London Borough of Merton

And congratulations to those who completed their Level 2 Diploma in Work-based Environmental Conservation by studying with Capel Manor College within their place of work:

Nicholas Bowry	London Borough of Islington
Christopher Collins	London Borough of Islington
Andrew Hillier	London Borough of Islington
Jamie Jacobs	London Borough of Islington

DON'T MISS OUT – Take on an apprentice today

Discounts on Apprenticeships from 1st January – 30th April 2012

Capel Manor College wants to expand its apprenticeship programme, so we're now offering reduced rate apprenticeships for a limited period. Currently, apprenticeships are free to employers for any apprentice aged 16–18, but employers are required to make a contribution for those aged 19 and above. This is a barrier for many companies who would prefer to train new employees using an apprenticeship programme.

BUT! From 1st January 2012 until 30th April 2012, any employer who takes on an apprentice with the college will receive a discount of between 30% and 50% on their contribution.

For employers with a workforce of less than 50 employees this could be a saving of as much as £750.00.

Which courses?

- ▶ Capel Manor College will run a second Intermediate (Level 2) Apprenticeship in Trees and Timber in late January 2012. We also want to start another Level 3 Advanced Apprenticeship programme in April 2012, but we need employers to back our scheme.
- ▶ Intermediate (Level 2) Apprenticeships in Amenity Horticulture are available throughout the year and new groups will start at all centres in January 2012 and April 2012.

THIS IS A LIMITED OFFER AND EMPLOYER CONTRIBUTIONS WILL RETURN TO THEIR ORIGINAL LEVEL ON 1st MAY 2012.

	Age of apprentice (at start of course)		
	16–18	19–24	25+
Small business with less than 50 employees	Free	£650 (£1300)	£750 (£1500)
Medium-sized business with 50–999 employees	Free	£910 (£1300)	£1050 (£1500)
Large-sized business with over 1000 employees	Free	£1260 (£1800)	£1400 (£2000)

Original cost in red



What's New?

Apprentice wages set at £2.60 per hour

This applies to 18 year olds and under. For 19s and above, these rates apply for the first year only, after which the apprentice moves onto the national minimum wage.

New Trees and Timber Assessors joined the team at the beginning of November

All apprentices are assigned their own assessor who works closely with them throughout the programme to provide extra guidance so it is important that the assessors we appoint have current industry experience. The new assessors are:

Andrew Mead: Andrew has worked within the industry for many years and is an NPTC Assessor and LANTRA instructor.

Andrew McEwan: Andrew has many years' experience in conducting tree surveys and inspections.

Price reduction on some Short Courses introduced

We want to offer value for money on all our programmes and can now reduce the cost of several Short Courses. Full details are on our website at www.capel.ac.uk/employerservices but the main courses to benefit from this are:

- **CS32:** Felling of medium-sized trees, 3 days, now £380 – **a reduction of £320.**
- **CS40:** Carry out pruning operations, 2 days, now £250 – **a reduction of £310.**
- **CS41:** Sectional felling, 3 days, now £350 – **a reduction of £244.**

Also

- **New CS34 course.** Single windblown trees. 2 days for £250.
- **Combined CS40/41.** A 5 day course costing £450. Next date 20th–24th February 2012, please book by 15th January.

To book contact Employer Services on 08456 122 122 ext 245.

Trees and Timber Level 3 Advanced Apprenticeship start date

This is a new programme for the college and we aim to start this in the New Year. It is aimed at developing the management and technical skills of employees; giving a more in depth knowledge of pests, diseases and tree surveys. This course is suitable for more experienced employees who would like to continue their training and an excellent progression route for those who have completed a Level 2 Intermediate Apprenticeship. Places on this course are limited to around 6 so please register your interest by contacting Employer Services on 08456 122 122 ext 245.





Five minute interview

Michael Barker

Michael Barker is an operations manager for tree company CSG Ushers and a member of the Capel Manor Trees and Timber Apprenticeship Course Advisory Committee, helping to ensure the college apprenticeship programme provides relevant training.

What do you think of the apprenticeship programme?

We took two apprentices in a test run from 2010–2011. This year we took three more, so it's fair to say the programme has been really good for us. The two apprentices we trained up are fully certificated now and going out to do a variety of jobs including domestic and Local Authority work. We also sponsor one of the college's annual awards as it's good PR for both of us and shows support for this programme.

How does it help your business specifically?

The NPTC tickets are key. Without them I am not able to employ anyone. This programme enables me to take people on with no experience and no certification and through a partnership with the college we train them up and get their NPTC tickets at the Capel-run assessment centre. It's also cost-effective as the apprentices are, without wanting to sound glib, very good value for money. In the past we've had problems with some employees who turn up with their tickets requiring a good wage, but it turns out in practice they aren't worth the money, so this is a better system.

Isn't it a lot of effort?

I personally enjoy the mentoring side, I myself was an apprentice who has worked up to a management position. I'm pleased to be able to pass on some of my knowledge. Getting young people in and training them is good because they feel a sense of loyalty to the company. They are often the first to arrive in the morning and the last to leave at night and are usually very grateful for your time.

What quality of employee do you get at the end of the programme?

The apprentices come out at the end as a decent groundsman able to be of good value to the company, just needing experience, which we can give them.

What impact has the scheme had on your recruitment policies and those of parent company, City Suburban?

We now use it as a long term recruitment policy. I've pulled all my groundsman ads. City Suburban became aware of the programme because of the success we had with it and as a result have taken three apprentices this year.

How does what the apprentices learn at college fit with the practical experience you give them?

I find when they come to do their training at college they've had a first go at it at work already. The fact they go to college and learn theory gives them a broad base of experience: they benefit from learning from another experienced arborist as well as from ourselves which can give them a fresh insight into things.

How good is the course management team?

The manager is always at the end of the phone and sorts things out straight away while any general problems are addressed through the course advisory committee. It's good to have a relationship with the college which we weren't able to do before this programme. The assessor also pays us regular visits which is a useful alternative avenue for sorting out any problems the apprentice has.



Tailor-made apprenticeships

How do we support employers?

Recruitment

The college can help employers in the following ways:

1. Providing details of interested potential apprentices
2. Advertising your vacancies on the National Apprenticeship/Capel Manor websites
3. Attending employer selection days
4. Interviewing a shortlist of apprentices for particular vacancies

Communication

It is important that employers are kept fully up-to-date with the progress of their apprentices. We do this by having:

1. An official review every three months through a visit to the workplace
2. Timetable and details of the course discussed with employers
3. A personal assessor assigned to each apprentice
4. A programme manager available for each apprenticeship scheme to help resolve queries

How much work is involved for the employer?

1. Attendance at the original sign-up visit to check health and safety issues
2. Attendance at three monthly review visits
3. Mentoring of the apprentice within the workplace
4. Provision of work placed opportunities to reflect the learning provided at college



Short courses at centres across London



The college has had a base in Crystal Palace Park since 2006, which includes offices in the Jubilee Stand, a farm, and the historic park itself which is used for arboriculture, forestry and countryside training and short courses. The Horsenden Farm centre, west London at Gunnersbury Park, offers a range of arboriculture and countryside training which is carried out in the surrounding woodland.

Short courses are offered from both bases. Acquiring certificates of competence are a means of specialist training and updating skills in line with rigorous industry

standards. We offer a full set of chainsaw skills, from basic chainsaw maintenance through to felling trees and tree climbing, as well as courses in first aid and pesticides. The courses range from 1 to 5 days and take place on site and on nature reserves, country parks and private estates.

On all these courses the student – trainer ratio is very low. For example on each climbing or chainsaw-related course the ratio is 1:4. Our instructors are all experienced arborists following Lantra/NPTC guidelines and all attend regular updates on current industry best practice. This ensures that the information and training provided is the industry standard.

Both centres have top-of-the-range equipment and dedicated workshops.



The following organisations support our committees:



Capel Manor is one of the only land-based colleges in the country to have set up course advisory committees which are attended by industry representatives and LANTRA, the sector skills council for land-based industries. We hear why they are so keen to get involved in skills training



“As employers we need to encourage young people into the profession and retain their interest once they are there. There are many distractions and other routes for young people these days which makes this all the more challenging” – so says Lewis Taylor, who has 26 years’ experience in the parks service of Haringey Council and is now chair of one of Capel Manor College’s two course advisory committees.

Mr Taylor, who has headed the quarterly horticulture committee since it was set up last year, said: “Having a college committee structured towards employers’ needs is invaluable. We can be sure we are getting the training that suits us and another benefit is that we are kept abreast of the ever changing environment, particularly regarding funding.”

Another attendee, David Winn, of Lantra, agreed: “We benefit from meeting businesses and providers regularly. College staff indicate their challenges in providing training opportunities.”

According to Linda Hope, Employer Services Manager, the purpose of the committee is to

- Ensure that the training provided in the apprenticeship programmes is relevant
- To bring employers together to share ideas and develop best practice
- And to develop strong bonds between the college and the industry

Steve Biggs, chair of the Trees and Timber committee, said: “It’s certainly a good forum for getting problems out in the open and achieving workable solutions. One positive influence the committee had was to introduce block

release training instead of training on one day a week. With block release, the student gets trained in a specific area in a one week session which can then be consolidated back at the workplace.”

The committee has highlighted the need for a new short course training programme relating to the driving of mowers on slopes which is now being considered by the college. It has already set up the Advanced Arboriculture Apprenticeship because employers identified a need for higher level skills training.

Mr Taylor added: “The Advanced Apprenticeship has been particularly useful. The college staff are fully committed towards listening to employers needs. I believe that Capel Manor is a first class provider of training within the horticultural profession and I’m proud to be associated with the forum.”

FACTBOX!

Course Advisory Committees

- **What are they:** Two committees, one for each of the two apprenticeship courses in Horticulture and Trees and Timber.
- **How frequent are they?** Quarterly.
- **What subject matter?** To discuss problems, ways of improving the courses/the need for new courses, and to share information and ideas.
- **Membership:** Five or six industry representatives, a Lantra rep and the college’s Employer Services Director, course manager and Employer Services manager.
- **Typical agenda items:** fee criteria for apprenticeships for SMEs, issues with CS39 assessment, chipper certification, job sheets discussed and action points set, NPTC assessor training update from Lantra.
- **Key successes:** creation of new apprenticeship course, plans for new short courses to address skills shortages.