

Successful Apprenticeship for the Lough Erne Landscape Partnership

The Lough Erne Landscape Partnership (LELP) have just completed their first successful government backed apprenticeship scheme and the first such post for RSPB NI (as lead partner for LELP). In 2019 the team recruited for a Business Support Apprentice post to work alongside the team whilst studying with Rutledge Training for a Customer Service Qualification.



Following a vigorous selection process LELP were delighted to recruit Jade Bloomfield to the role who has now completed her apprenticeship in September 2020.

Jade discusses here apprenticeship experience with LELP and RSPB below:

“From August 2019 I studied for my Level 2 in Customer Service Apprenticeship with LELP. From the onset I quickly realised that this role would be extremely varied and offer new challenges every day. From day one I was accepted as one of the team attending the Fermanagh county show in my first week, although this was daunting, I learnt a lot about LELP and had the opportunity to start building relationships with project partners.”

JADE BLOOMFIELD – BUSINESS SUPPORT APPRENTICE

I went into the role with very little understanding of behind the scenes in offices and the apprenticeship has taught me a lot about office environments and partnership working. I have learnt an enormous amount of different skills within this role. From learning how to update websites and increase following on social media platforms to organising large- and small-scale events. I have learnt the processes involved and gained an understanding of what is required to carry out tasks.

I gained great confidence during my apprenticeship and my ability to communicate and build relationships with others has greatly improved. I had the opportunity to work with many different people in both formal and informal settings and I have learnt how to adjust and communicate in a professional tone, whilst building a relationship with people for the future.

My line manager gave me responsibility for collating data for monthly reports and to maintain the LELP website updates, this trust built my confidence in the workplace and I knew that I always had the guidance of my manager whenever I needed it. With my previous personal lack of experience, I would have found it extremely difficult to get an opportunity like this elsewhere and don't think I would have learnt such varied skills in any other workplace.

All in all, my apprenticeship was an amazing experience with a great team I learnt a lot and now have the confidence to go forward in my education. From working in the office, I realised that I enjoy working with budgets and numbers and I am now studying in South West college to become an Accounts Technician. The apprenticeship provided me with so many opportunities and skills and I would recommend an apprenticeship scheme to anyone who has the opportunity.
Thank you!”



JADE AT FERMANAGH COUNTY SHOW

Jade has gained a lot from her apprenticeship and her development to partake in further study is a remarkable outcome for her apprenticeship experience. However, the apprenticeship is not only beneficial to those partaking in the apprenticeship but also to members of the team and the wider organisation.

Heather Gott (LELP Community Connections and Volunteer Manager) took on the role of Line Manager. Not only was the role a professional mentoring role but also one of providing pastoral support to Jade throughout her apprenticeship. Below Heather discusses her experience of being manager to an apprentice:

"This apprenticeship provided me with the opportunity to manage an apprentice for the first time and I have since developed my leadership and management style from what I have learnt."

Jade fitted into the team immediately and started during a very busy period for the organisation. Jade brought with her a new energy and a different outlook on activities, and her creativity for engaging families and children in nature brought a new dynamic to the work that we carried out. This new outlook and fresh focus provided the team with new ideas and impacted the programme as whole.



THE LELP TEAM



JADE BLOOMFIELD, HEATHER GOTT AND SARAH JANE BEACOM (FODC) TREE PLANTING

Jade joined the team at a time where the momentum of activities was ever increasing, with new challenges every day and a very pressured timetable. Jades input to the team at this time was invaluable and we would not have been able to maintain the momentum of certain projects without her contribution. After several months Jade was able to take responsibility for several activities with minimal management enabling other members of the team to work on other tasks. Jades contribution to LELP has been immeasurable over her apprenticeship and her willingness to learn and engage has had a positive impact on the team and those with whom she engaged with.

It was fantastic to watch Jade grow in confidence during her apprenticeship and she was very quick to learn new skills and adjust to new situations. Jades communication and interpersonal skills improved throughout the apprenticeship and she now has the skills that will enable her to progress in her studies and career. My confidence as a manager has grown alongside Jades as I have mentored Jade and watched her progress.

I have had the opportunity to mentor, coach and teach a member of staff and although during the pandemic the apprenticeship delivery had to alter, it has taught me to adjust to differing circumstances whilst ensuring that I support those in the team. The apprenticeship experience was a great learning curve for me and one that I hope I get the opportunity to carry out again."

Elmarie Swanepoel (Programme Manager): *It is clear from these testimonies that offering an apprenticeship can deliver many benefits for organisations and individuals alike. On behalf of the Lough Erne Landscape Partnership I would like to offer our congratulations to Jade and Heather, with best wishes for a very successful future.*



MEMBERS OF THE LELP TEAM ON A FIELD VISIT WITH LELP CHAIR RICHARD WATSON