

PR1443 – 30 September 2010

Extension of land-based Modern Apprenticeships

Offering apprenticeships in horticulture since 1947, for the first time ever the Land and Environmental Services branch of Glasgow City Council has now extended its services and is also offering a Modern Apprenticeship in Agriculture in addition to its highly successful horticulture programme.

Apprentices undertaking the Modern Apprenticeship in Agriculture are based at Pollok Country Park (which has been keeping pure-bred Highland cattle since the 1830 s), with an element of distance learning. This provides them with the hands-on experience of caring for the animals whilst gaining a qualification at the same time.

Twenty seven Modern Apprentices enrolled this year for an apprenticeship in horticulture. Through this work-based learning, the young people have the opportunity to work within the 105 parks and gardens in Glasgow, with attendance at college two days per week for those on vocational qualifications. In addition, Glasgow City Council has its own dedicated training centre, Daldowie Training Centre, where those completing level 2 and level 3 Modern Apprenticeships undertake training.

Billy Kenny said: Modern Apprentices undertake a 6 month placements across a range of environmental and land management spectrums which include parks and open spaces, production nurseries, glass houses, golf courses and parks within Glasgow. This experience helps the young people decide on which area of horticulture they want to specialise.

Lantra, the Sector Skills Council for environmental and land-based industries helps ensure that the Scotland has the right skills to keep its parks and green spaces in good condition. National Director for Scotland, Willie Fergusson said: Cultivating the next generation of gardeners is a crucial job in a country where horticulture plays such an important role. We need more gardeners and it is our obligation to produce them. Modern Apprenticeships provide young or older people with a recognised qualification, high quality training and excellent job progression prospects.

Glasgow is hosting the Commonwealth Games in 2014 which will create a lot of work within the city. Billy said: Under the Commonwealth apprenticeship initiative, 10 Modern Apprentices will be travelling to Delhi to witness the handover ceremony of the Commonwealth Games; this will allow them to see first hand the skills that are going to be required to get ready for the 2014 games. It is also important to future proof our skills as this will help maintain the high standards the citizens of Glasgow have come to expect. The Games offer apprentices a great way to prepare for this.

Robert Booth, Executive Director for Land and Environmental Services stated: I am genuinely proud of our Modern Apprenticeship programme and believe that it provides real opportunities for the young people of Glasgow to progress to a high level within their chosen field. Many of our

current managers have come through the programme and indeed three of our current training team are old boys as well. The Modern Apprenticeship programme allows young people to achieve a good education and develop knowledge and skills in the context of a real working environment. At the end of their three years our Modern Apprentices have developed a high standard of competence and moreover are experienced in the work requirements of LES Operations. The fact that we retain some 95% of time-out Modern Apprentices is testament to the effectiveness of the training programme and of the abilities of the apprentices themselves.

Glasgow City Council, in conjunction with the Incorporation of Gardeners of Glasgow have in the past offered scholarships to horticultural Modern Apprentices to travel to Dublin, Cardiff, or South Africa; through this experience apprentices are encouraged to pass on their skills and knowledge to other trainees and school children.

Billy concluded: Glasgow has a tradition of training apprentices for the city; however some of these young people go on and travel across the world where some very exciting opportunities are available to them.

Further information on the Commonwealth apprentice initiative can be found at www.glasgow.gov.uk, information about Modern Apprenticeships at www.skillsdevelopmentscotland.co.uk or contact Lantra on 01738 553311 or at www.lantra.co.uk for any additional information.

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CREDIT FOR PHOTO

DSC_8344 (L-R) Robert Brown, Councillor Coleman and Jim McLaughlin with trainees

EDITORS NOTES

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