

# Castlemilk Park Employability Project

training *for* better



greenspace and  
job opportunities

## 01 Cassiltoun Group, Glasgow

The Castlemilk Park Employability Project seeks to address both the environmental degradation of an under-used woodland greenspace and key social and economic problems. It is an innovative multi partner approach which has delivered far reaching benefits for trainees engaged in the scheme and local residents.

### Introduction

The Employability Project is one element of a larger initiative with the aim of rejuvenating Castlemilk's woodlands. The scheme is run by the Cassiltoun Group (Trust and Housing Association) and has two aims. Firstly, to offer unemployed individuals an opportunity to increase their employability by learning new skills and gaining qualifications. Secondly, to help provide much needed improvements to a local greenspace.



*Bringing change to life*



Central Scotland Green Network

## Inputs

Each 8 week scheme costs £13,500 to run, with a per trainee placement cost of £3,066. This covers the cost of a full-time supervisor and support from other individuals to manage the project and support the trainees, all the tools and equipment required to deliver the project, a base for the trainees and the costs of gaining accredited qualifications.

## Background

Castlemilk Woodlands cover an area of 30 hectares located around a densely populated housing scheme on the periphery of Glasgow. For many years the woodlands and path network have been neglected and local residents have increasingly viewed the park as a place with poor environmental standards and a focus for anti-social behaviour.

There is a remarkable concentration of deprivation in the area. As well as suffering from high levels of unemployment and low income, poor health is a major issue with local residents experiencing higher than average incidences of heart disease, cancer, respiratory ailments and drug misuse problems.

It was recognised that, as a local greenspace, Castlemilk Woodlands could play a vital role in improving the social, economic and environmental fabric of the area. A multi-agency partnership was established in 2010 with the ambition to provide physical greenspace improvements and to improve and enhance opportunities for people to engage with and use the woodlands to improve their own health and well-being.



## The Project

This Employability Project started in May 2012. It offered 5 unemployed youngsters an opportunity to participate in an 8 week training course; and ran on a rolling basis over 2 years. This project was funded primarily through the CSGN Development Fund with additional funding from Cassiltoun Housing and the Wise Group (during year 1).

Although, Cassiltoun Group was responsible for overall strategic management of the scheme and providing materials, the Wise Group was the delivery partner in year 1



with responsibility for recruitment and delivery of day-to-day training for all participants.

During each 8 week scheme, a variety of practical work was undertaken, which has resulted in environmental and habitat improvements within the woods of Castlemilk Park. Trainees took part in a wide range of activities, including footpath improvements and woodland management.

## Inputs

Each 8 week scheme costs £13,500 to run, with a per trainee placement cost of £3,066. This includes a full-time supervisor and support from other individuals to manage the project and assist the trainees, all the tools and equipment required to deliver the project, a base for the trainees and the costs associated with gaining formal qualifications.

## Outputs

A total of 14 young people participated in the scheme between July and December 2012. Positive outcomes were recorded for all of the trainees, with 5 participants entering into employment. Although the other 9 did not find a job, they did gain additional skills and qualifications.

Practical work focused on achieving the CSCS (Construction Skills Certification Scheme) Card and Health and Safety training. The development of softer skills was also seen as a key output. This included increasing confidence and improving communication skills which will help trainees to compete for jobs or gain access to further education.

Vocational skills achieved in 2012 included learning in footpath improvements, maintenance litter removal, woodland management, habitat enhancement, health and safety, watercourse improvements and land management.

Other core skills covered included team work, personal responsibility, time keeping, greater physical well-being, CV building and job search skills.

Additionally, the training provided gave participants a reference to help them with their job search activity; as well as helping them develop a more positive attitude towards work and a greater interest in the environment.

## Outcomes

The Castlemilk Park Employability Project has increased the skills and qualifications of their trainees and improved the chances of them gaining employment.

The trainees have gained the experience of working outdoors in a team on a physical task which is making a positive difference to an environment suffering from neglect and abuse. This activity delivers far reaching physical and mental health benefits.

The project also helped to improve an area of neglected greenspace into a destination that people want to visit. This has been stimulated and encouraged by other aspects of the Cassiltoun Group's work which has taken advantage of the improvements to hold more activities there. With increased usage, anti-social behaviour has decreased and the woodland is becoming a valued community resource for informal recreation, access and education.

## Keys to Success

The project staff are seen as one of the key factors in the success of this scheme. They are committed to the development of the trainees to help them become more confident and more successful in their efforts to gain employment.

Another important aspect of the staff's activities is the production of regular monitoring reports which ensure that the training provided meets the needs of local employers and that it is effective in teaching new outdoor skills to participants.

## Future

In year 2 of the scheme, the training period will be extended. Ideally, the Cassiltoun Group would like to see this period extended to 26 weeks, (although this will

*"The CSGN funding of the employability project has made a significant impact on what the partnership is trying to achieve in the park. The partnership, local residents and park users have noticed the positive changes, with clearer pathways and less litter and the park feeling more managed and cared for. We are also pleased that the participants both enjoy their time on the project and have achieved successful outcomes. We realise that this is only the start and we are working hard to raise the necessary funds to continue to develop and improve the woodland."*

**Richard Bolton, Cassiltoun Housing Association**

depend on increased levels of funding being available). Because of the relatively short training period, much of the training is seasonal in nature and trainees do not get opportunities to develop as a wide range of skills as possible. It is thought that an extended training period will give trainees the opportunity to use different machinery, develop different skills and work on different projects.

Year 2 will also see the introduction of Scottish Qualification Authority accredited training modules within the horticultural skills area, as well as continuing with the CSCS card. The Cassiltoun Group is also considering the potential to extend this scheme to other local greenspaces.



## Outputs

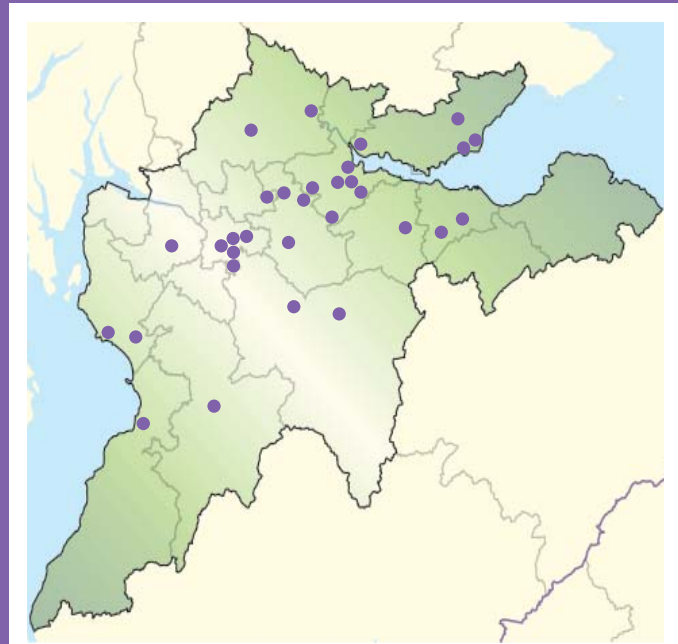
- 14 volunteers between July and December 2012
- 13 achieved Construction Skills Certification Scheme Card
- Positive outcomes for all of the trainees
- 5 into employment, 9 gaining additional skills and qualifications

## Outdoor training in the CSGN area

### Key Facts

- In 2012, there were a total of 677 trainees, on 57 separate courses - 12 trainees per course.
- Courses were delivered through from 31 programmes which were administered by 24 separate organisations.
- Programmes lasted an average of 24 weeks and most schemes ran at least twice during the year.
- Of the 297 individual trainees for which we have additional data, 135 (or 46%) went directly into employment, 27% returned to unemployment, 20% went into volunteering, 5% went into education and 1% undertook a further course.
- The mean average cost per trainee was circa £6,225 (though this varies widely)

### Location of outdoor training schemes in the CSGN area in 2012



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*The CSGN will change the face of Central Scotland by restoring and improving the rural and urban landscape of the area.*

### What is the CSGN?

The CSGN is one of the 14 national developments in the National Planning Framework 2. It is the biggest greenspace project in Europe and will help to make Central Scotland a more attractive and distinctive place to live, to visit and to do business. The CSGN has wide political and partner support and an all encompassing remit, far beyond just a 'green' initiative, with economic development central on the agenda.

### Why are we interested in training?

The prosperity of Central Scotland is fundamentally linked to the skills of its workforce and we believe that the environmental sector can play a positive role in enhancing the employment prospects for everyone – especially young people. This will help to deliver not only career orientated skills but also those transferable 'soft' skills which a wide

variety of employers require. Under the 'A Place for Growth' theme, the CSGN aims to increase employment and training in land based 'green' and 'low carbon' industries with the objective of not only providing meaningful work experience and support for young people but also to improve local greenspace for everyone to enjoy.

### What are these Case Studies for?

This report is one in a series of six case studies which demonstrate that for a relatively modest investment, outdoor based training and employment projects can have profound and far reaching impacts on the lives of people furthest from the labour market. The reports are intended to inspire other organisations to take similar approaches and to inform interested parties, such as Local Authorities, in order to encourage a supportive environment for such initiatives.

### Getting in Touch

To discuss this case study please contact:  
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For further information on the CSGN and other case studies please visit: [www.centralscotlandgreennetwork.org](http://www.centralscotlandgreennetwork.org)

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