

Which course is right for me?

Find out more about the Trust's Forest School and Outdoor Learning courses, delivered by our team of experienced professionals.

Whether you want to find out a bit more about the Forest School ethos, Outdoor Learning or would like to develop your practical skills to support learning outside the classroom, the Trust offers a range of adult learning opportunities across Hampshire and the Isle of Wight delivered at our beautiful woodland nature reserves and staffed by a team of experienced professionals.

Why choose Hampshire & Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust?

By opting to train with Hampshire & Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust, you are not only supporting your local wildlife charity but also initiating a new supportive relationship on the journey to becoming an inspiring Outdoor or Forest School Leader.

Our tutors are experts in biodiversity protection and ecological management of education sites. We have a wealth of experience to share from delivering Outdoor Learning and Forest School in a range of environments, from early years and different key stage school groups, through to adults and special educational needs groups.

Our tutors can offer you individual support, feedback, and advice throughout your training and beyond. Our close ties to the local FSA Hampshire group enable us to mentor and skill-share with the local Forest School community beyond initial leadership training. Our tutors are active members of the Forest School Association (FSA) ensuring our delivery and assessment quality remains current and of high quality.

Dawn Preston holds an Endorsed Trainer Status with the FSA and our Forest School training programme enables our certificated trainees to apply for the FSA Accredited Forest School Provider scheme.

Dawn O'Malley is part of the Learning Through Landscapes Accredited Professional Network and is able to offer you and your school practical information, guidance, and support to improve your school grounds sustainably for outdoor learning opportunities and local wildlife.

In addition to our accredited long courses, our tutors are also experienced in delivering Outdoor Learning or Forest School taster INSET and CPD training either on school sites, local green/blue spaces, or at our nature reserves, from £300 for a half-day or twilight session to £500 for a full day.

Hampshire and Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust first started to deliver Forest School programmes to local schools and community groups in 2007 as part of their environmental education programme. The Trust's education service holds the Quality Badge from the Council for Learning Outside the Classroom. Our education team are all DBS checked and have completed Outdoor or Forest School First Aid training. If you would like to know more about training with Hampshire and Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust, please email: ForestSchool@hiwwt.org.uk

Meet the team



Dawn Preston

“Dawn’s knowledge and expertise are delivered calmly and confidently making her a naturally inspiring person and superb tutor, trainer and education officer. Her attention to detail through the teaching and tutoring process from administration to the individuals needs in the outdoors never waivers and this level of attention is evident from the youngest of learners to the eldest. Her ability to deliver in this style is representative of her reflective style in practice and is carried forward from her Forest School training and experience working with trainers and education staff across the region. Dawn has been key in developing the local FSA Hampshire Local Group.”

Adrian Goodhand



Dawn O’Malley

“Dawn is passionate about outdoor play and this has naturally led her to become a Forest School Leader. Dawn is equally enthusiastic about Forest School and is experienced in the delivery of school and holiday Forest School and Wild Beach programmes, and to families and children with additional needs in particular. Dawn is a member of the Learning Through Landscapes accredited professional network and is experience in consulting with schools in developing their grounds for learning and wildlife gains. She helped to set up the FSA Hampshire Local Group several years ago, and she is currently the group Secretary.”

Jim Day



Meet the team



Susan Simmonds

“Susan has a lifelong passion for wildlife and has worked in conservation for the Trust for over 20 years. With a degree in Environmental Science and experience of teaching both as a sessional lecturer at Sparsholt College and in the Lifelong Learning Sector, she enjoys passing on her wealth of knowledge and enthusiasm to others. Susan has a desire to play a part in conserving our natural world through education for all ages and has run a variety of regular training courses on wildflower identification, mammal tracks and signs, water vole surveys and recently fly surveying on rivers. Over the last year she has adapted her programme of training to include online learning and has delivered training courses as well as school, college and university sessions online, alongside making educational videos.

Susan’s knowledge and passion for wildlife are infectious and her enthusiasm and friendliness make her an excellent tutor for children and adults of all ages and abilities.”

Clare Bishop



Abi Gibbard

“Abi has a background in schools as well as sound environmental knowledge and interest. A classroom teacher, former SENCO and Senior Leader, she moved towards Forest School, embracing it’s ethos as the reason she chose teaching originally.

I have had the pleasure of working with Abi as I trained to be a Forest School leader, I observed her calm manner as she facilitated child-led learning. Whilst I completed my training, Abi encouraged me to reflect upon and question many of my preconceived ideas, allowing me to grow and flourish in my practice.

Abi instinctively brings her wealth of experience about children and their learning to nature’s doorstep, providing inspiration for all.”

Lucy Hale



Meet the team



© Lianne de Mello

Craig Whitelock

“Craig has the ability to share his love and thorough knowledge of nature and wildlife with all ages but especially early years and primary age children.

His open and friendly manner helps him convey his passion for improving gardens, allotments and schools and setting grounds for wildlife, and his wealth of hands-on experience informs all his teaching and training.”

Dawn Preston



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Course information



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The Forest School Association

This is the professional body of Forest School practitioners and should be the first port of call for independent information and advice about Forest School in the UK. Forest School trainees studying accredited Level 1, 2 or 3 courses are eligible for a discounted membership of the Forest School Association. The Trust can give you further details of this offer during the training. The FSA has compiled a free booklet to support people who are looking to set up a Forest School, become a Forest School practitioner or who are 'Forest School curious'. The document is a reflective tool to help prospective Forest School leaders navigate through common problems encountered by the community during set up and delivery. You can read their guidance [here](#).

**How to set up
a Forest School
- from the roots up!**

Please see the following pages for a comparison of courses to find the one that is right for you.

[Click here to book your course with the Trust](#)



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**Hampshire &
Isle of Wight**
Wildlife Trust

Forest School training

Forest School Experience Day

Description of training

Experience days are held regularly at our woodland nature reserves across Hampshire and the Isle of Wight. Led by one of our Level 3 Forest School leaders, the day provides the learner with the opportunity to take part in a Forest School session, trying activities such as fire lighting, shelter building, campfire cooking, natural art and crafts and more. The sessions are practical and take place outside from 10:00 until 16:00.

We can also deliver bespoke sessions for up to fifteen learners, focussing on how Forest School can support different areas of the curriculum or individuals with behaviour/attention disorders and those with special or additional needs.

Course content

Whole day practical outdoor session, variable according to the season, weather conditions and requirements of the group.

Who is the course for?

The course is for people with limited or no previous experience of Forest School who would like to find out more.

Entry criteria

N/A

Accreditation

The course is not accredited but you will receive a certificate of attendance from the Trust.

Supporter requirements

N/A

Forest School training

Forest School Level 1

Description of training

The Level 1 Award in Forest School Ethos and Principles provides learners with an introduction to the Forest School ethos as well as the opportunity to develop skills such as:

- Tool use
- Environmental games and activities
- Risk assessment
- An introduction to woodland management

The course is led by a member of our Forest School training team and takes place over two consecutive days, from 10:00 until 16:00. The sessions will take place outdoors at one of our woodland nature reserves.

Course content

- Two-day training programme
- Level 1 workbook to be completed within one month of the start date
- Attendance at a Forest School session led by a Level 3 Forest School leader (we can put you in touch with a suitable person if required)
- A written record of your observations at Forest School

Who is the course for?

Member of Forest School staff team: Those with a Level 1 qualification would be able to join the staff team of an established Forest School, helping to plan and deliver sessions and support learners. It can also be used as a first step for those considering taking Forest School Leader training at a later date.

Entry criteria

- ◇ Participants must be over 16 years of age
- ◇ Participants should have an interest in working outdoors with children and young people

Accreditation

On successful completion of the course you will be awarded a LASER Level 1 Award in the Forest School Ethos and Principles (RQF). We expect the course to take you about three months to complete.

Supporter requirements

To enable and support the trainee to shadow a Forest School session led by a local provider to complete a written observation within two months of the course start date. This may be through releasing the trainee during work hours to attend.

Should the trainee fail to complete the portfolio coursework within the given three-month deadline, the Trust charge a £50 per month extension. Please see the learner agreement for full details.

Forest School training

Forest School Level 2

Description of training

The Level 2 Forest School training course offers a more in-depth look at the Forest School ethos and qualifies learners to become Forest School Assistants, supporting a Level 3 Leader to run Forest School programmes. The course will take you through the Forest School approach to learning and the principles of risk management. Learners will have the opportunity to develop their practical skills, including:

- Safe lighting, management and use of a campfire
- Safe use of a range of hand tools
- Delivery of a variety of games and activities
- Identification of woodland flora and fauna
- The sustainable use of woodland within the context of Forest School.

The course will be run on Forest School principles, so you will experience the Forest School ethos first hand. The course will be led by a member of our Forest School training team and takes place over four consecutive days from 09:30 until 16:30 at one of our woodland nature reserves.

Course content

- Four-day training programme
- Level 2 workbook to be completed within six months of the start date
- Assist with three Forest School sessions led by a Level 3 Forest School leader (we can put you in touch with a suitable person if required)
- A written record of your observations at Forest School

Who is the course for?

Forest School Assistant: This course is designed for individuals wishing to assist with the delivery of Forest School programmes, supporting sessions led by a Level 3 practitioner.

Entry criteria

- ◇ Participants should be over 18 years of age
- ◇ Participants should have experience of working with children or young people
- ◇ Participants should be DBS checked within the last three years

Accreditation

On successful completion of the course, including workbook, you will be awarded the LASER Level 2 Award for Forest School Assistants (RQF). We expect the course to take you about six months to complete.

Supporter requirements

To enable and support the trainee to assist at three consecutive Forest School sessions led by a local provider to complete the written portfolio work within six months of the course start date. This may be through releasing the trainee during work hours to attend.

Should the trainee fail to complete the portfolio coursework within the given six-month deadline, the Trust charge a £50 per month extension. Please see the learner agreement for full details.

Forest School training

Forest School Level 3

Description of training

The Level 3 Certificate for Forest School Leaders prepares participants to set up their own Forest School provision, planning, delivering and monitoring all aspects of a Forest School programme, including:

- How to plan and deliver an Introductory Forest School programme
- Current theories on the Forest school approach to learning and development
- How to identify, assess and manage risk at Forest School
- Safe use of a range of hand tools and associated skills
- How to light, manage and use a campfire in a Forest School setting
- A range of outdoor games and activities which promote environmental awareness and connection with nature and wellbeing
- Identification of woodland flora and fauna
- The sustainable use of a woodland within the context of Forest School

The course will be run on Forest School principles, so you will have experience of the Forest School ethos. Most of the training days run from 09:30 until 16:30 (with the exception of the skills assessment days) at one of our woodland nature reserves and as much time as possible will be spent outdoors.

Course content

- Five days of training in Forest School theory and practice
- A coursework portfolio which should be completed within twelve months of the course start date
- Three portfolio days assist learners with coursework and offer support with the development of your Forest School programmes
- Two skills days to develop and assess practical skills and to discuss progress
- Two Forest School with Paediatric First Aid training days (16-hour ITC certificate)
- Learners are required to plan and deliver an introductory Forest School programme of six sessions with their chosen client group and will be assessed at one of the sessions by a member of our Forest School training team. The programme should take place within twelve months of the course start date.

Who is the course for?

Forest School Leader: This course is the nationally recognised standard of training for individuals wishing to lead and manage a Forest School programme.

Entry criteria

- ◇ Participants should be over 21 years of age
- ◇ Participants should hold a qualification at Level 2 or above in teaching or learning or should have significant experience of working with young people
- ◇ Participants must be DBS checked within the last three years
- ◇ All participants will hold a Forest School First Aid certificate by the end of the course. This training has been integrated into the course and is a 16-hour Forest School First Aid certificate with a Level 3 Paediatric First Aid Certificate.

Accreditation

On successful completion of the course, you will be awarded the LASER Level 3 Certificate for Forest School Leaders (RQF) which is a nationally recognised qualification and is compatible with the FSA Accredited Forest School Provider Scheme. You will receive your certificate on successful completion of your coursework portfolio, the practical skills days and your planned sessions.

Forest School training

Forest School Level 3

Supporter requirements

The trainee is required to plan, deliver and evaluate a six-session Forest School programme for a group. The supporter agrees to support the trainee to prepare the FS handbook by sharing current setting information, such as insurance details and health and safety documents, and supporting the trainee to develop Forest School specific health and safety documentation. This may be through regular meetings, time allowed during work hours to complete documentation, for example.

The supporter will also enable the trainee to deliver six Introduction to Forest School sessions to a suitable client group, following the FS principles, ethos and criteria (i.e. low child to staff ratios to enable risky play opportunities, delivering a child-led ethos, in a wooded environment. Please see [the FSA website](#) for more details.

Should the trainee fail to deliver the observed session demonstrating the good practice outlined above, the Trust will impose an additional charge of £50 for a second observation visit. Should the trainee fail to complete the portfolio coursework within the given one-year deadline, the Trust will charge a £100 per month extension. Please see the learner agreement for full details, and you can watch [this video](#) about the course.

Outdoor Curriculum Level 3

Description of training

Learning outside of the classroom offers children and young people of all abilities and backgrounds opportunities to gain confidence and holistic skills through a series of hands-on learning experiences in school grounds and local green spaces. This Outdoor Curriculum Level 3 training enables you to develop and deliver outdoor learning sessions and programmes linked to the National Curriculum and covers:

- Integrating the Curriculum into Outdoor Learning
- Health & Safety in Outdoor Learning
- Practical skills
- Outdoor Learning Practitioner: developing an Outdoor Learning Strategy
- Wildlife Gardening skills

This LASER accredited in-depth training course is an exciting opportunity to learn from our highly experienced, inspirational LOTC accredited team of outdoor educators.

This is a blended learning course. Most of the training days run from 09:30 until 16:30 (with the exception of the skills assessment day) at one of our woodland nature reserves and as much time as possible will be spent outdoors. Other training and portfolio days will be online via Zoom - full dates and timings will be provided in the pre-course information.

Course content

- Three online training days
- Five training days on-site at Swanwick Lakes Nature Reserve
- One skills assessment day to develop and assess practical skills
- Two online portfolio days to assist you with course work and support you while developing your Outdoor Learning Strategy
- A coursework portfolio which should be completed within 12 months of the course start date

Who is the course for?

Teachers, Learning Support or Teaching Assistants interested in developing outdoor learning opportunities, outdoor learning policies and schemes of work at their school.

Entry criteria

- ◇ Participants should be over 21 years of age
- ◇ Participants should hold a qualification at Level 2 or above in teaching or learning support and already be working or volunteering in a school
- ◇ Participants should have significant experience of working with young people
- ◇ Participants must be DBS checked within the last three years

Accreditation

On successful completion of the course, you will be awarded the LASER Level 3 Outdoor Curriculum Leader (RQF) which is nationally recognised. You will receive your certificate on successful completion of your coursework portfolio, the practical skills assessment and your planned sessions.

Supporter requirements

Please be aware that support for planning and delivering Outdoor Learning sessions and time to put together the portfolio are particularly important with this training. We recommend any supporter/ line manager reads the pre-booking information before you complete the booking and application process. Should the trainee fail to complete the portfolio coursework within the given one year deadline, the Trust will charge £100 per month extension. Please see the learner agreement for full details.