



PRESS RELEASE

August 2024

Calling Blackburn and Preston community leaders: FREE course will help people connect with nature

A free course is being planned for community leaders in Blackburn and Preston, to help them learn skills and confidence around organising outdoor nature activities for groups they are involved with.

The three-day event, which runs from **1st to 3rd October**, will help inform community leaders about opportunities available for people to get outdoors and connect with nature. It will be held at Witton Park, Blackburn and Beacon Fell Country Park, Preston.

Once upskilled, these community leaders will be supported to arrange and run activities for their own groups, within the local landscape.

This is the second such training course which is being organised as part of the three-year Connecting People and Nature project, being delivered by UK educational charity The Ernest Cook Trust and the Forest of Bowland National Landscape, supported by The National Lottery Heritage Fund, and Lancashire and South Cumbria NHS Foundation Trust. Its focus is on promoting nature, wellbeing, and Outdoor Learning.

The first training course was held in Burnley and Ribble Valley, and the people taking part represented a range of organisations, including disability services, a youth group, and an artist delivering wellbeing courses.

“This course allows community leaders to strengthen their skills in communication and gain confidence in taking their work outdoors, while learning about which green spaces would be best to use within the local area and how,” said Alison Cross, one of The Ernest Cook Trust’s Outdoor Learning Officers.

The course will take place on 1st October, at the Active Outdoors Hub, Witton Park, Blackburn. On 2nd and 3rd October, the venue will switch to Beacon Fell Country Park, Preston, within the Forest of Bowland National Landscape, with free transport for those who need it.

For more information, please email alison.cross@ernestcooktrust.org.uk.

Notes to editors

The Ernest Cook Trust

[The Ernest Cook Trust](#) offers children and young people, their families and communities, the chance to learn from the land through hands-on Outdoor Learning activities.

The Ernest Cook Trust is a charity limited by guarantee with the sole charitable objective of education.

The Trust places Learning at its very heart by offering children and young people a chance to connect with nature and to take action on the environment in a meaningful and positive way. The Trust awards around £2m per year in grants based on relevance and impact against

organisational objectives. Grants are given to schools or charitable organisations for activities in the UK with a particular focus on areas where there are fewer opportunities to experience the outdoors.

For more information about The Ernest Cook Trust visit www.ernestcooktrust.org.uk or contact press officer Jo Smyth – email media@ernestcooktrust.org.uk.

The Forest of Bowland National Landscape

The Forest of Bowland National Landscape is one of 46 National Landscapes in England, Wales and Northern Ireland. <https://landscapesforlife.org.uk/>

The Forest of Bowland was designated as an AONB in 1964. The AONB legislation (National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949, Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000) was designed to protect areas of unspoiled natural beauty for future generations.

13% of the AONB is designated as a Site of Special Scientific Interest for its extensive habitats of wet and dry heathland, particularly heather moor and blanket bog. A major part of the AONB's fells is designated as a Special Protection Area under the European Birds Directive.

The Connecting People & Nature project is one of the ways in which the AONB Partnership enables people to enjoy, learn, and give back to the outstanding landscape and heritage on their doorstep.

For more information, please contact cathy.hopley@lancashire.gov.uk or visit www.forestofbowland.com.

About The National Lottery Heritage Fund

As the largest dedicated funder of the UK's heritage, The National Lottery Heritage Fund's vision is for heritage to be valued, cared for and sustained for everyone, now and in the future as set out in our strategic plan, Heritage 2033.

Over the next ten years, the Heritage Fund aims to invest £3.6billion raised for good causes by National Lottery players to bring about benefits for people, places and the natural environment.

The Heritage Fund helps protect, transform and share the things from the past that people care about, from popular museums and historic places, our natural environment and fragile species, to the languages and cultural traditions that celebrate who we are.

The Heritage Fund is passionate about heritage and committed to driving innovation and collaboration to make a positive difference to people's lives today, while leaving a lasting legacy for future generations to enjoy.

Follow @HeritageFundUK on Twitter, Facebook and Instagram and use #NationalLotteryHeritageFund www.heritagefund.org.uk.

