



Apprentice Farm Worker (Francis Stone Apprenticeship)

APPRENTICESHIP	Livestock Unit Technician (Level 3), with Option: General Farm Worker (Level 2) – candidate dependent.
TRAINING PROVIDER	Kendal College
LOCATION	Low Beckside Farm, Mungrisdale, Cumbria, CA11 0XR
HOURS	31.5hrs/week 0.9FTE (including 20% off the job training) 18 months Fixed Term
SALARY	£20,638; £12.60/hr (£22,932 FTE)
REPORTS TO	Farmer (Education)
WORKING WITH	Visiting groups/trainees, Outdoor Learning Officers, Head of Learning, Operations & Partnerships (Cumbria/Lancashire).
START DATE	September 2025

About The Ernest Cook Trust

The Ernest Cook Trust is an educational charity and one of the UK's foremost providers and funders of Outdoor Learning. Our vision is for an environmentally engaged society with stronger connections to nature.

Our mission is to improve life chances of children and young people through a range of Outdoor Learning activities, enabling them to learn from nature, empowering them to have a positive impact on the environment. We do this through grant support, direct delivery of our own programmes, research and advocacy.

About Low Beckside Farm

Low Beckside is an upland sheep farm with 550 sheep and 400 acres of land, a mix of grazing, conservation, water courses and woodland habitats. We have common grazing rights on Mungrisdale Common and have 4 different Sites of Special Scientific Interest across the farm.

We acquired Low Beckside Farm from Newton Rigg College in 2021, securing its continued future as a centre for land-based learning. Since taking on the farm, we have been working with local colleges, universities, schools and training providers to create land-based learning opportunities for young people in the region. We have also been busy developing the farm, adding cattle into the mix, performance recording the fell and in-by flock using the Shearwell data system, soil mapping and improving soil health, while improving existing buildings to

improve animal welfare. We have planted 2.6km of hedging, laid existing hedging and added water infrastructure to the fields to allow us to start creating a paddock grazing system for our in-by flock and fell lambs once weaned.

We have exciting plans for the next few years, which we would love our new Apprentice to be part of —working to reduce pesticide and fertilizer inputs, reseeding with herbal lays, over-seeding with clover and legumes, improving drainage, and planting more hedges and fencing off water courses to reduce water run-off and nutrient loss – this will also increase habitat for wildlife. We plan improve the draft flock to make it more efficient, work to understand our carbon footprint, and create new wetlands and fenn. Plenty to get stuck-in to!

Potential applicants need to be aware that Low Beckside Farm is not accessible by public transport and is in an isolated rural community. Work will be physically demanding, and you will be out and about, whatever the weather. There is a very small team on the farm so team working ability is essential.

About the Francis Stone Apprenticeship

The Francis Stone Apprenticeship, created in honour of one of the The Ernest Cook Trust's longest serving former tenant farmers, has been created to give an opportunity to a new entrant to farming. It will offer a rare opportunity to work with a hefted flock, which is an essential skill for many future farm tenancies in the region. We're also supportive of the Apprentice using the opportunity to train and run their own sheepdog.

This is one profession where no two days will be alike. You may be expected to lamb sheep one day and repair fences the next. Anyone who is keen to try all trades and loves learning new skills should absolutely apply. We are looking for enthusiasm and a strong work ethic; any previous experience is great but not essential. If there is a skill you are unfamiliar with, don't worry, you will work directly with the Farmer and a mentor who will give comprehensive on-site training.

You will receive training in First Aid and Safe Use of Pesticides as part of your apprenticeship, and extra courses and training such as ATV and tractor driving to ensure you get the best start in your career. Additional support with Maths and English can be provided if required. The apprenticeship provider is Kendal College.

You will also have an opportunity to help out with visiting groups and demonstrate your skills!

If you're interested in finding out about a range of different types of farming through your apprenticeship, we may be able to arrange for you to spend time at other farms through our local networks. This is something we can discuss with you to find out more about your interests.

The Francis Stone Apprenticeship includes a travel bursary, to support the successful candidate's commute to the farm. This could be towards any transport costs including driving lessons or vehicle insurance.

Role Overview

- Help to maintain our flock of 550 sheep. Checking stock, feeding, watering, dosing, clipping, recording health checks and generally ensuring we have a healthy, well looked-after flock to be proud of.
- Help maintain our herd of cattle. Moving, dosing and general health checks.
- Operate several different types of machinery, including tractors, quads, toppers and sprayers, to carry out responsibilities of role.
- Repair equipment when it breaks down and perform routine maintenance to identify problems before they escalate.
- Put up and maintain fences and dry stone walls. Repair footpaths, gates and stiles.

- Shepherd stock, monitor health and condition of our animals and assisting in moving them around the farm.
- Be prepared to get stuck-in at lambing time. Assist in the delivering of newborns, administering medication and maintaining a fit and healthy flock.
- Be a part of transforming the farm through nature restoration. You will be planting trees and hedges, digging ponds, increasing biodiversity and conservation value to the benefit of our farm.
- Maintain communications with other staff, contractors, vets, land agents and other organisations we work with.
- Be proactive in keeping the farm in a clean and tidy state.
- Be part of Outdoor Learning and education at Low Beckside. This might involve helping to set up classrooms, prepare stock for groups to work with or assist other staff when we have groups of young people or children working at the farm

There is currently a shortage of skilled farm workers, so ongoing full-time employment is likely to be available in the region. The Ernest Cook Trust will support you with the next steps in your career with additional employability training if required, plus give you opportunities to build a network of contacts in farming, through local groups and placements. We cannot guarantee ongoing employment with the Trust after the apprenticeship, but will do our best to open doors to employment for you.

Person Specification

Skills required

- Physical and mental stamina
- Great communication skills, both written and verbal
- Ability to listen to instruction and take advice

Education and Qualifications

- GCSE Maths and English at 9-2 (A*-E) or equivalent (additional support with Maths and English can be provided if required)

Personal Qualities

- A proven interest in being outdoors
- Keen to learn every aspect of the role
- Happy to roll your sleeves up and get stuck-in, whatever the job or the weather

General

- If you can't drive yet, you must be prepared to start learning and you must be able to get yourself to and from Low Beckside on a daily basis. You can apply for a travel bursary for this role.

We are looking for a candidate who is keen to try all trades and loves learning new skills, with enthusiasm and a positive work ethic. Any previous experience is great but not essential as you will be receiving comprehensive on-site training from the Farmer and a mentor.

How to Apply

If you're interested in applying, please do come along to the Open Afternoon at Low Beckside Farm on Friday 11 April 2025 where you'll have an opportunity to meet the people you'd be working with, see lambing in progress and get a feel for the location and facilities. Please contact learning@ernestcooktrust.org.uk if you have any queries.

Open Afternoon

Friday 11 April 2025 from 13:00 – 17:00 at Low Beckside Farm, Mungrisdale, CA11 0XR

How to apply

In the first instance, please upload your completed CV and cover letter to:

<https://hr.breathehr.com/v/apprentice-farm-worker-39505>

Closing Date

Friday 25 April 2025 at 17:00

Interviews

Monday 12 May 2025 at Low Beckside Farm, Mungrisdale, CA11 0XR

<https://w3w.co/remarking.parks.client>

We look forward to hearing from you.

Working at The Ernest Cook Trust

ABOUT US

As both a landowning organisation and an educational charity, we know we are naturally unique. We seek to create opportunities that help people flourish through connections to nature - particularly children, young people, their families and communities who face barriers to accessing and participating in the outdoors.

The Ernest Cook Trust is part of an impressive community of networks and organisations across the UK, working to help create a more environmentally engaged society. Our work is increasingly done in collaborations and partnerships with like-minded organisations, particularly with our funding partners, whose contribution significantly boosts the reach and influence of our work.

Take a look at our website for more information.

www.ernestcooktrust.org.uk

OUR LEARNING STRATEGY

Our Learning strategy is designed to ensure we make the most of our landholdings, maximise the impact of our work and remain true to our charitable object of education. It guides our partnerships, grant giving and direct delivery, with programmes sitting across three strategic themes:



Take a closer look at our Learning Strategy [here](#).

OUR VALUES

The unique spirit of The Ernest Cook Trust is best expressed through our values:



Cultivating Connections

At the heart of our work lies the belief that meaningful and lasting change happens through the cultivation of connections. We value the relationships we build with the people and communities we serve, as well as each other and the partnerships we form with like-minded organisations. We understand that these connections create the conditions for people and places to flourish.



Freedom to Try

We embrace a culture of innovation and resilience, where both our team members and the individuals we serve have the freedom to try new things. This value encourages a dynamic and adaptable approach, nurturing trust and courage in ourselves and others.



Progressive Stewardship

We believe in responsible, forward-thinking management of our outdoor resources, as places where diversity can thrive. By actively caring for the environment, we ensure that the beauty and benefits of the outdoors are accessible to all, changing lives through individual and shared positive experiences.

WHAT TO EXPECT

Join our growing team at the Trust for a friendly and rewarding experience. We offer competitive salaries, a range of benefits plus a training budget for your personal growth.

We currently have around 55 ECT team members at our Gloucestershire head office, across our UK landholdings and in our regional hubs (Gloucestershire, Cumbria/Lancashire, Leicestershire) or working hybridly.

Enjoy our generous benefits:

- 10% employer pension contribution (5% from employees)
- 27 days annual leave, plus statutory holidays and additional leave between Christmas and New Year
- Life Assurance
- Access to Employee Assistance Programme, providing 24/7 support for health, mental wellbeing, and more
- Dynamic, creative, and welcoming work environment

Equity, Diversity and Inclusion

Embracing diversity is an essential part of the work of The Ernest Cook Trust. We are committed to treating everyone as a unique individual, fairly and with respect, irrespective of race, disability, age, gender, marital status, sexual orientation, or religion. We are committed to ensuring equality, respect, and safety for all, and prioritising the wellbeing of the children, young people and vulnerable adults we support. Our safeguarding policy can be found [here](#).

The appointment will be subject to satisfactory background checks including Disclosure and Barring Service and relevant online searches to comply with best practices in Safeguarding, and proof of the right to work in the UK.

Q&A with Jon

We asked our current Farm Worker Apprentice Jon questions regarding his experience as an apprentice with The Ernest Cook Trust and advice for future applicants.

Q1 The best thing about being an Apprentice at Low Beckside Farm?

Working with a good team. It's broadened my horizons and knowledge about everything going on at Low Beckside.

Q2 What is the most valuable thing you've learnt during your apprenticeship?

Looking after livestock and nature during the day-to-day maintenance of the farm. I've learnt how to get revenue from schemes.

Q3 Is there a 'stand-out' moment that will stay with you from your time as an apprentice?

Gathering the fell.

Clipping.

Being involved with transformation of the farm, and with groups.

Q4 What advice would you give to the next Francis Stone Apprentice?

Get stuck in.

Don't dilly dally.

Don't be afraid to make mistakes because there's plenty of time to improve.

Q5 How well has this apprenticeship prepared you for your next steps?

I achieved a good grade from college and might go on to do level 4. It's shown me there are other options to make income other than livestock. I'm now better suited to working in a team.

Q6 What's next for you on your career path?

Experience different aspects of agriculture and take them back to my home farm.

Manage the farm at home. Working 2-days per week for the Trust at Low Beckside Farm.