



**Dean Heritage Centre**  
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- Press Release -

## **Sustainable woodland project awarded Ernest Cook Grant**

24<sup>th</sup> February: For immediate release

The Dean Heritage Centre (DHC) is delighted to announce it has been awarded £2,800 by the Ernest Cook Trust, an educational charity dedicated to the conservation and management of the countryside.

The cash boost will go towards a sustainable coppicing project being organised by staff at the heritage Centre, which will take place on Forestry Commission land.

Three areas of land have been set aside for the coppicing work, which seeks to develop a commercially viable project to enhance the public's understanding of sustainable working practices within the natural environment.

Clayton Ryder, Site Manager at the DHC and project manager, explained: "Coppicing is a traditional method of woodland management which takes advantage of the fact that many trees make new growth from the stump or roots if cut down. In this case, we will be planting Hazel saplings which will then be cut down to the stump so they re-grow producing multiple stems called poles or rods. These poles or rods can then be harvested approximately every 7 to 8 years and converted into a wide range of products.

"We're not cutting down trees, selling off the wood and hoping something grows, we're doing it properly and working with the Forest. By doing so, we are working within the landscape rather than against it."

The project is being run in partnership with Lakers School, a local state funded business and enterprise College, based in Coleford.

On hearing the news of the grant, John Barnard, Deputy Assistant Head Teacher said: 'This project is really important. It will give our students the opportunity to work alongside people in the community.'

The students, aged between, 14 and 15, will be involved in the project from the beginning and will study risk assessments as well as physically clearing the land. They will work towards a BTEC certificate in Countryside and Environment





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Management which will train them for work in conservation, horticulture and land based industries or could lead on to further study.

John concluded, 'This is a really good joint partnership. It's practical experience which will be really helpful for their CVs and university applications.'

The Ernest Cook grant was essential for the coppicing project to begin, but ultimately the project will be self-sustaining.

Nathalie Hall, Centre Manager of the DHC, said, 'We are extremely grateful to the Ernest Cook Trust. The grant will allow us to buy much needed tools and equipment which will be of benefit long after the first stage of the project. The money also allows us to purchase Hazel saplings and fund initial staff time, then in seven to eight years we'll have our first harvest and revenue from this will go back into the project. We are looking to the long-term benefits this will offer in terms of education locally and enjoyment of visitors to the Forest of Dean.'

The project is taking place on the Bradley Hill walk that leaves from the DHC. A display identifying the sites and the estimated timescales will be on show in the foyer where staff from the Centre will be happy to direct visitors to the site.

- End -

For more information or if you would like a photograph to illustrate the article please contact Kathryn Ashcroft on 01594 822170 or email: [Kathryn@deanheritagemuseum.com](mailto:Kathryn@deanheritagemuseum.com)

## Notes to editors

- The Dean Heritage Centre is based in five acres of scenic woodland and is home to the 'Museum of the Forest'. It tells the story of the Forest of Dean and its' people spanning 10,000 years of history, from the ice age to present day.
- It is open 363 days a year and offers a full diary of events, activities and exhibitions.
- The Museum is a centre of education and offers tailored educational workshops and activities to tie in with the school curriculum. For more information please call Sarah Fuller on 01594 822170.
- The Centre has been awarded the accreditation of Quality Assured Visitor Attraction.
- The Dean Heritage Museum Trust (DHMT) is a company limited by guarantee and is a registered charity.
- In March 2007 the Centre was awarded the accreditation of Quality Assured Visitor Attraction.
- The Ernest Cook Trust is one of the UK's leading educational charities. It was founded by the philanthropist Ernest Cookin 1952 and each year the trustees distribute around £1.4m in educational grants to benefit children and young people.

