

BCA Apprenticeship newsletter



Edition 2 – January 2026

FROM SEEDS TO ROOTS: JANUARY APPRENTICESHIP UPDATE

As the seasons shift and our projects take root, both our first- and second-year apprentices continue to thrive in their land-based learning journeys. From the classroom to the field, the growth has been evident – not just in skills and confidence, but in the flourishing landscapes they help maintain.



Greenkeeping & Sports Turf

It's a busy time in green keeping as the playing season has been winding down, most of the apprentices have now completed course renovations. They have undertaken a wide variety of jobs, some for the first time. Therefore, the next set of webinars will focus on fertiliser spreading, aeration and scarifying.

Worthy employer and apprentice acknowledgment must go to Aylesbury Vale Golf Club, who have had Robert Battams, Thomas Neal and Freddi Foley all complete their End Point Assessments within a week of each other. Two clubs have held Clutch Tour events, giving the apprentices' a lot to prepare for, and this has been a valuable experience for Johnny Hooper at Leatherhead Golf Club and Myles Burke at Castle Royal Golf Club.

In the world of Sports Turf – the groundstaff have had a busy year of maintaining cricket pitches and have also completed their pitch renovations. The focus now turns to rugby and football, where we will be looking at pitch marking.

Sam Stabler
Skills Coach – Greenkeeping and Sports Turf

Our greenkeeping apprentices have been especially busy, focussing on turf management techniques, mowing patterns and soil care. Together, the apprentices are building strong foundations for rewarding careers, and their progress is a testament to the hard work and passion that drive this programme forward.

Landscaping

Our Level 3 Landscaping Apprentices will be finalising their design plans for the Apprentice Garden and the Plant Identification areas, making sure that the area is best utilised for teaching and End Point Assessments.

The Apprentice Garden was prepared for seeding in October by the Level 2 Apprentices who rotavated, levelled and spread the grass seed. Since then the seed has taken extremely well due to the perfect growing conditions and amazing work of the students.

The grass has been cut twice now, and is ready for the next stage of development. Once the Level 3 design plans are complete we intend to implement them, which will include creating paths, fencing and a shade area within the Garden.

Our Level 2s will be planting up the Plant Identification area ready for use in the upcoming Assessments for the Landscape Students in their Second Year, that are about to successfully complete their apprenticeship!

Pete Dawson
Skills Coach – Landscaping



Royal Horticultural Society

BCA is an approved Royal Horticultural Society (RHS) training centre, and we are gearing up for an exciting start to 2026 as students dive back into their horticulture studies. Both new and returning learners are continuing their RHS Level 2 and Level 3 courses, which continue to be among the most popular programmes offered at the college. These courses provide a mix of hands-on practical training and essential plant science theory, giving students the skills they need for careers in horticulture and environmental work. The highlight – and for our Level 2s, the biggest challenge – of the upcoming term is the PCA-1 (Practical Certificate Assessment 1), scheduled for February 2026. This key assessment forms part of the RHS Level 2 Practical Certificate and tests students on core practical abilities such as plant identification, propagation, soil preparation, and safe tool use.

Lecturers have noted strong commitment from this year's cohort, with weekend workshops and practice sessions already filling up as learners prepare for the big day. With interest in horticulture continuing to bloom, the college encourages anyone considering an RHS qualification to contact the enrolment office early. The new year promises to bring fresh growth – not just in the gardens, but in the skills and confidence of our students.



Greenkeeping

Lawrence Jones, Programme Lead – Greenkeeping and Sports Turf

The new Greenkeeping Apprentices have and will be focusing on a range of key topics, including the importance of top dressing and its intended outcomes, sustainable waste management practices, and essential turf maintenance techniques such as aeration, scarification, and grooming. They will also be identifying pests, weeds, diseases, and disorders, as well as various grass and seed types.

We are very proud to share some notable achievements, including Mathew Strutt-Donnelly who won the prestigious TORO Young Greenkeeper of the Year award – an honour highly regarded within the industry. Devon Baker, who successfully completed his Level 2 qualification, overcoming personal nerves to earn a well-deserved merit. Harry White also recently passed his Level 2 and has since been promoted to Spray Technician at East Berkshire Golf Club. Meanwhile, Will Headland has achieved a distinction in his Level 3 exam with an impressive score of 61 out of 70 – the highest his Skills Coach has seen. Looking ahead, our Greenkeeping Team will be attending BTME in January, it will be a great opportunity to catch up with current, former, and prospective apprentices.

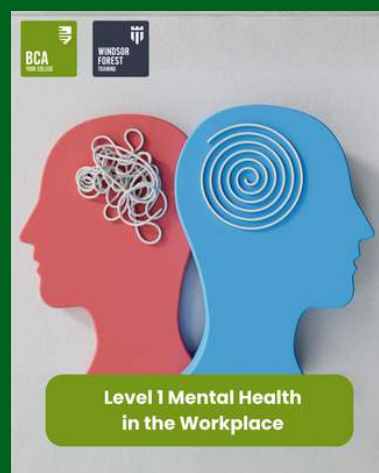
We are also attending one of Europe's largest greenkeeping events with an estimated 5,000 attendees this year, offering a packed programme of seminars, expert talks, and hands-on displays. The event provides a major hub for professional development and industry networking. For us, the benefits include connecting with current and prospective apprentices and golf clubs, and to maintain visibility within the sector. As the second-largest provider of greenkeeping apprenticeships, being present is an essential part of sustaining strong industry links.

Land-based Training

Lucy Rogers, Land-based Coordinator

In today's fast-paced world, mental wellbeing is no longer optional – it's essential. Our "Mental Health in the Workplace" course equips employees and leaders with practical tools to reduce stress, foster resilience, and build a supportive working culture. Through expert guidance, real-world scenarios, and evidence-based strategies, participants learn to spot early signs of burnout, communicate effectively about mental health, and create healthier, more productive teams.

This one day course is a great introduction for anyone looking to enhance their awareness of mental health, or to progress toward Level 2 and Level 3 qualifications. There are places available on our next course on Thursday 26 February (9-12), at a cost of £80 per candidate. Email training@windsor-forest.ac.uk to book your spot.



upcoming events

13th January 2026

BIGGA Exhibition

Like previous years, we are attending Europe's most substantial greenkeeping event, filled with talks and hands-on displays, and a chance to maintain our strong reputation of being the second-largest provider of apprenticeships

10th February 2026

National Apprenticeships Week Fair

This event offers employers the opportunity to meet potential apprentices and showcase any upcoming vacancies. Students from BCA can discuss potential apprenticeship opportunities, and explore their future career paths.

9:30am-11:30am

26th February 2026

Mental Health in the Workplace Course

Boost wellbeing and productivity with our "Mental Health in the Workplace" course. Learn practical strategies to manage stress, support colleagues, and create a healthier, more resilient work culture.

7th March 2026

National Engineering Day

Celebrate National Engineering Day with us on social media! We're inviting employers to partner in supporting the next generation of innovators. Join us to showcase your expertise, inspire future engineers, and help build a stronger, more skilled workforce.

8th March 2026

International Women's Day

Join us on socials this International Women's Day as we champion women in apprenticeships. We're calling on employers to partner with us in creating inclusive pathways, highlighting female talent, and opening doors to rewarding careers for women across every sector.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION ABOUT THE TOPICS MENTIONED,
PLEASE VISIT:**

bca.ac.uk/apprenticeships

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