

Jack Connolly

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CASE STUDY | JACK CONNOLLY - AN APPRENTICE'S STORY



Completed
Level 2 in Horticulture
August 2020



Based in
Queen Elizabeth Olympic
Park, London

Jack completed his Level 2 Horticulture Apprenticeship at *idverde's* Performance Campus in August 2020. He's now a Grounds Maintenance Operative in one of London's most prestigious parks! We chatted to him to find out more about his learning journey.

Why did you decide to do this Apprenticeship?

I wasn't sure what to do when I left college, but I did know I wanted to work outdoors. I came across the opportunity to work at the Olympic Park and took it; an opportunity to apply new skills in a real work setting. Although I wasn't too clear on my future plans, I knew how valuable the apprenticeship could be, and to me it was a solid stepping stone down the right path.

What were your favourite parts of your Apprenticeship

Working on a Gold winning Chelsea Flower Show garden is a unique experience few people get to be a part of, and I can proudly say "I have!" However, there are few places as unique as QEOP. The Olympic Park is a large parkland in the middle of a major sports, media, culture and retail hub, in the middle of East London. Having worked here will be a special point of pride for me, for many years to come, far prouder a feeling than working on any gold medal garden.

Did you learn anything during your Apprenticeship which surprised you?

The size of the landscape industry is larger than I thought. It employs hundreds of thousands of people and generates billions in revenue in the UK. Many people think of it as not very technical or needing much thought, but this is false. The depth of knowledge from some of the people I have worked with is incredible and inspires me to learn and know as much as I can.

How has doing the Apprenticeship benefitted you and how has it affected your long-term career path?

Apart from learning new skills and knowledge, I have benefited by being able to appreciate what working life is. I have matured and bettered as a person I think; I am more confident now than I was at the start of the apprenticeship. I am less likely to give up when faced with difficulty, I am more persistent in my work and relationships with others, and I am more professional than I was.

In the long-run, the apprenticeship has had a positive impact on my career. I have made good friends, learned new skills and have become a more fulfilled and focused person.

The apprenticeship has triggered a desire and passion to know more and do more. I know that this will drive the progression of my career.



Why would you recommend people take up an Apprenticeship with idverde?

idverde is one of the largest green space contractors in Europe. Training with them allows apprentices to potentially build a career out of the numerous options idverde can offer across a number of prestigious contracts, as well as building relationships with countless professionals as they progress in their time with idverde.

What advice would you give to anyone considering doing an Apprenticeship?

Seize the day. If you see an opportunity you like, jump on it! Don't pass something up because it's unfamiliar or brings you somewhere out of your comfort zone. There is more to the job than mowing lawns and pruning roses, but you need to go out and find those chances. You can be the head groundsman for your favourite club, you could be on a research team in a far off expedition, you could be the leading authority on woodlands in the UK. You can be more than where you start in your career, but it is down to you put the time and effort in to get there, and it will be the best experience of your life learning and earning your way into that dream job.

Where would you like to be in five years?

I would like to one day work in national park as a ranger. The role requires as much scientific knowledge as it does practical experience. That is why over the next five years I want to continue learning as much as I can and being a part of as many practical opportunities as I can. I would like to enter higher education by the end of the next five years and I am confident that I will achieve that.



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