Heritage and Horticulture Apprentice – Dig for Victory

Location	Hope Farm Community Garden, Hawkhurst
Reports to	Dig for Victory Project Delivery Lead
Contract	3-year National Lottery Heritage Fund fixed-term contract; intention to develop a sustainable longer-term role, subject to funding
Hours	Full Time
Salary	£20,000

Background:

Hands of Hope is a community charity helping people across Rother, Hastings and West Kent connect with nature, healthy food and one another. Our 22-acre Hope Farm Community Garden in Hawkhurst brings together growing, cooking, heritage and community activities. Our National Lottery Heritage Fund project, Dig for Victory – Stories, Skills and Sustainable Food Heritage, celebrates local food-growing history and shares traditional skills with new generations.

Job purpose:

The post-holder will work as part of the Hands of Hope horticulture and heritage team, developing practical skills and knowledge in organic horticulture, heritage kitchen gardening and wartime food-growing practices, while contributing to the delivery of the Hands of Hope Dig for Victory programme.

The role will combine practical horticulture with the exploration, interpretation and demonstration of heritage skills associated with the Second World War period, including food growing, food preservation, recycling, resourcefulness, make-do-and-mend and traditional domestic and craft skills.

The apprentice will support the development and maintenance of the Hands of Hope Dig for Victory Garden and associated outreach gardens, growing appropriate heritage crops and learning how wartime kitchen gardens were planned and managed in response to rationing, food shortages and national food-production campaigns.

The post-holder will work alongside the Heritage Education and Community Lead to support heritage learning activities, demonstrations, workshops, intergenerational activities and community engagement.

The role will provide an opportunity to develop practical expertise in both horticulture and living heritage, learning how practical heritage skills can be used to connect people with local and national history, sustainability, food production and community resilience.

The post-holder will be expected to undertake formal apprenticeship learning and training alongside their practical duties and to actively engage with their agreed learning and development programme.

This is an active, outdoor role requiring practical work in all seasons and in a range of weather conditions.

Key Responsibilities

Heritage growing and garden care

- Help plan, plant, maintain and harvest the Dig for Victory Garden and outreach growing spaces, using organic and historically informed methods.
- Learn seasonal gardening skills, including soil care, composting, propagation, seed saving, crop care and safe harvesting and storage.
- Explore wartime crops, rationing and food security, and help record the varieties and techniques used.

Heritage learning and community activities

- Work with the heritage, education and Cook School teams to support demonstrations, workshops and activities for schools, families, volunteers and community groups.
- Help share traditional skills such as food preservation, resourcefulness, reuse and make-do-and-mend, following appropriate safety guidance.
- Assist with displays, interpretation and events that bring local stories and food-growing heritage to life; help create a welcoming, inclusive experience for participants.
- Support wider garden and estates work where it contributes to the programme.

Apprenticeship and professional development

- Complete the agreed apprenticeship training, assessments and off-the-job learning, maintaining an up-to-date learning portfolio.
- Apply new skills in practice, take part in progress reviews and gradually develop confidence and independence.
- Work safely with tools and equipment, follow safeguarding and site procedures, and maintain simple activity records.

Person specification

Essential experience and knowledge

- Eligible and willing to undertake the agreed recognised apprenticeship; keen to learn practical horticulture and heritage skills.
- Interested in organic growing, sustainability and British social or wartime food history; comfortable with physical outdoor work in varied weather.
- Able to follow instructions and safety procedures and communicate respectfully with people of different ages and backgrounds.

Personal qualities

Curious, dependable, practical and enthusiastic; willing to work as part of a team and learn from colleagues, volunteers and community members.

General responsibilities

Follow Hands of Hope policies on safeguarding, health and safety, data protection and inclusion; contribute to activity records, evaluation and team meetings, and undertake other reasonable duties appropriate to the role.

Main terms and conditions

Annual leave: 28 days excluding Bank Holidays, pro rata for part-time staff. Working patterns will reflect operational needs; occasional evening, weekend or Bank Holiday work may be required. Appointment is subject to satisfactory references and, where appropriate, a DBS check.