

# Where land and learning meet

***With over 20 years in the industry, Andrew Fletcher knows the value of hard work and second chances. Through GVA Training, he's helping others build both.***

In the rolling countryside near Halifax (United Kingdom), Green Valley Arborists Ltd (GVA) has built a reputation for arboriculture, forestry, and land management. From its base at Far Turbury Farm, the company operates nationwide, combining expertise with environmental responsibility. Alongside this commercial work sits a mission with wider impact: GVA Training, recently recognized as a Lantra Awards approved provider.

Lantra is one of the UK and Ireland's leading awarding bodies for the land-based industries, setting national standards and accrediting courses across forestry, agriculture, horticulture and landscaping. As an approved provider, GVA Training can now deliver these nationally recognized qualifications – giving learners portable skills respected by employers across the sector.

At the heart of this training effort is Andrew Fletcher, Corporate Training Instructor and Co-ordinator. With a career spanning more than two decades, his passion lies in giving people the tools – and confidence – to build brighter futures.

## **A twist of fate**

Andrew didn't set out to work in land-based industries. A keen sportsman, he studied coaching in basketball, football and sailing, qualified as a ski instructor, and travelled extensively in South America and Canada. On his return, he applied for a sports science degree – only to learn the course had been cancelled.

"While I was on the phone to the college, a prospectus rolled down the stairs and opened on the horticulture and arboriculture page," he laughs. "It felt like a sign. I applied, got in, and never looked back."

That chance moment became the start of a 20-year journey. He has since worked as a climber, project manager, consultant, and now trainer. "Every day is different," he reflects. "You're outdoors, problem-solving, and watching people grow. That's what makes it rewarding."

## **Training with purpose**

Andrew could have taken a classroom teaching role, but chose GVA because it allowed him to remain active in the industry he loves. "I need to be out there, alongside people, showing them the ropes in real environments," he says. "This way I can do what I love and help others at the same time."

Through its partnership with Lantra, GVA now delivers nationally accredited qualifications to apprentices, veterans, career changers, and ex-offenders to aid meaningful employment in



land-based sectors. The courses are open to all – whether someone is taking their first step into arboriculture or building on existing skills, there is a pathway for them.

### **Giving back to communities**

GVA's reach extends well beyond technical training. The team works with schools, veterans' groups, and social impact organisations to make a difference where it's needed most — from restoring storm-damaged woodland to improving community green spaces.

A recent pilot with Hindley Prison and National Highways enabled inmates to earn qualifications and Lifetime Skills Cards – industry ID cards that prove a person's training and competencies to employers, helping them secure work on release. "It's about second chances," Andrew says. "Everybody deserves the opportunity to build a future."

### **Tools that make the difference**

Supporting this work is a fleet of five Yanmar SV60 mini excavators, wrapped in neon orange to match Lantra's bold branding. The machines were supplied by Field & Forest – a specialist dealer based in central Scotland with deep roots in forestry, and a trusted partner for Yanmar CE.

"The Yanmar machines have been fantastic," Andrew says. "They let us do more in less time, with ease. We've had virtually no maintenance issues, and they are key to supporting us in taking on bigger projects with confidence."

### **Sustainability at the core**

Sustainability is built into every lesson. Battery-powered tools sit alongside traditional equipment, Aspen alkylate fuels cut emissions, and woodchip is reused as biomass. For every tree removed, new ones are planted, with biodiversity boosted through wildflower seeding and pollinator habitats.

This philosophy reflects Yanmar's own vision. Through its Green Challenge 2050, the company is working towards a carbon-neutral future. Central to this is Hanasaka – the belief that people and nature can thrive together, just as blossoming flowers enrich the world around them.

For Andrew Fletcher, it all comes back to people. His career began with a twist of fate, and now he is determined to create opportunities for others.

"We're teaching people how to use machines, but also how to understand the land, respect it, and do work that has meaning. That's what motivates me, and what makes the difference."