



Payback pays off for scouts

Offenders serving their sentences in the community under the Community Payback scheme have helped Dorset Scouts to build a much-needed facility at their Camping and Activity Centre at Buddens Farm near Wareham.

The offenders, under the supervision of Dorset Probation Area, have rebuilt a derelict former farm building at Buddens turning it into a new crew room.

This will be used, not only by the many volunteers who do maintenance and conservation tasks on the site, but also by the Community Payback work parties who are involved with other projects at the centre.

Currently these include a major project to install an underground tunnelling complex of 80 metres of tunnels and shafts which are due to be completed and ready for use in early July 2009. The offenders have also recently re-decorated the training centre on the site.

John Wiseman, Chief Officer of Dorset Probation Area, opened the new crew room on Friday 13 March. He said: "Through Community Payback, offenders across Dorset are truly paying back the local community for the crimes they have committed by completing projects that benefit the public.

"This excellent new facility at Buddens Farm is just one example where offenders under supervision have produced something of great benefit to a local community in Dorset.

"Other projects that we supervise across the county include litter picking, graffiti removal, gardening and groundwork, decorating and producing lunches for groups of older people."

Dorset Probation Area supervises approximately 75,000 hours of unpaid work per year, which equates to around £430,000 worth of labour calculated at the rate of minimum wage.

It also provides educational training and rehabilitative offender programmes to help reduce the likelihood of offenders reoffending.

Dorset Scouts' County Commissioner, Mike Parkes, thanked the work parties and their Supervisor, Mervyn Harris, for their hard work and enthusiasm on this and their many other projects.

He said: "This is a marvellous scheme which not only benefits the many thousands of young people from Scouts, schools and other youth organisations who use Buddens each year, but also provides useful skills training and work experience for offenders. We are very happy to be working in partnership with the Probation Service in this worthwhile scheme."



Phil Ventham, Operations Manager at Buddens Farm Scout Centre, and Chief Probation Officer John Wiseman