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## Colin's Story

Colin has lived in the area since he was six and remembers seeing hundreds of people walking down Long Street to work at Lister's every weekday – a sight long gone.

But he has faith that The Learning Community (TLC) project, being launched in Cam and Dursley will give local a people a voice to bring learning and training opportunities into the area.



"They are talking about a new lease of life for the Lister Petter site, encouraging new businesses and employment. But if local people don't have the skills these new businesses want, why would they come here?"

"We need to be prepared to encourage more jobs into the area, to stop people having to travel miles to work every day and to put something back into the community."

Colin is well known for trying to launch practical solutions to local problems - and he is hoping similar ideas will get support through The Learning Community.

"There need to be more opportunities for local people to learn a range of skills, from bricklaying and plumbing to childcare and computers. At the moment, there are some courses held locally, but if you want to move on and get qualifications which employers are looking for, you have to travel to Stroud, Gloucester and Cheltenham and if you don't have a car, you're sunk.

"Local job opportunities are limited for all ages – from school leavers to young mums who want to get back to work when their children start school. There needs to be much more choice and flexibility about what people can learn locally.

"Even if you are working full time, you might hate your job and want to get out of it - but where in Cam and Dursley can you learn the new skills you might need?"

In the past, Colin, aged 45, has tried to get a range of ideas off the ground, including offering to drive a mini bus to take people to work at Cribbs Causeway, launching a radio station to be run by young people and, as a qualified instructor, offering fork lift truck driving skills training. Colin also has a certificate in counselling skills.

"I'm sure The Learning Community will be looking at all sorts of ways to create more chances for local people to get the sort of job and way of life they are after, which is why I am supporting it and happy to help," he says.

The Learning Community (TLC) in Dursley and Cam is campaigning to get more flexible courses and training in the local community, geared to skills which local employers need and local people want.

Colin is one of a band of TLC Learning Champions who will encourage friends and neighbours to get more involved in learning and training, helping to make the area a better place to live and work.

