

One year on!

What local people say about their learning experiences:

As a learner (Willow Weaving)... I would like to say that it was definitely a very friendly and sociable way of learning a valuable new skill. Having previously thought of myself as "not very talented" in the artistic or craft type areas, I was absolutely amazed to discover that, once I knew how, I could produce such useful and beautiful willow structures. This year I have had an absolute riot of sweet peas and morning glory climbing and tumbling over my very own works of art! What a sense of achievement! I would certainly recommend this Course to anyone. More please!!

Four weeks ago I could not turn a computer on – now I can type an e-mail to my daughter in Australia.

I was frightened to go out, let alone join a class, and now I have more confidence thanks to the friendly tutor.

I want to do a Nursing course but need Level 2 Maths. Thanks to the support of TLC, I am now attending a class to gain a national qualification level 2.

TLC Membership Scheme

The Learning Community's membership card scheme is **FREE** to join for learners undertaking certain targeted college courses and TLC-funded courses. Since the scheme's launch in spring, our 140 Bronze Card Holders have received a range of incentives including a free swim voucher for Dursley pool, a 7-day pass to Stratford Park Leisure Centre, "hire one/hire one free" on DVDs and videos at the library together with discounts in selected Cam and Dursley stores. More incentives are available to Silver Card Holders (who have completed at least 3 courses) including "buy one, get one free" entry to Slimbridge WWT, a 30% discount off Stroud College Courses 2005-6, and a range of **FREE** taster courses at Dursley Education Centre including an Introduction to Web Design, Desktop Publishing and Digital Imaging.

One year on...

Welcome to this special edition of The Learning Community's Newsletter celebrating the project's first birthday.

The Learning Community (TLC) is an exciting project working to develop a vibrant and thriving Learning Community in Cam and Dursley based on the needs of local residents, young people and employers.



BACKGROUND

TLC is a Government initiative that is being piloted in only 28 areas in the country. Cam and Dursley was chosen because of the recent decline in the manufacturing industries – Listers, Mawdsleys and Bymacks, and because of the new development of the former Listers' site – Littlecombe. Throughout the first year we have been working hard to raise the profile of learning, engaging local people as learners and 'Learning Reps' and putting on courses relevant to the needs identified in the local survey of residents and employers at the start of the project.

Please contact us for more information or if you would like a specific course put on in the area.

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THANK YOU!

We would like to take this opportunity to thank all our Learning Reps and partner organisations whose hard work and commitment to the project have made it so successful.

More local learners!

Since the initiative was launched in October 2004, nearly 1,500 learners in the GL11 area have been on courses supported by TLC in some way. More than 300 local people have been encouraged to start a learning course for the first time since leaving school, with about one third already moving on to Level 2 qualifications.

Click on-line!

Our website

www.thelearningcommunity.org.uk

gives you lots of up-to-date course information, news stories, contact directories and useful links as well as some fun games and quizzes to test your English and Maths skills – if you dare! Since August, the site has had more than 500 hits.

TLC Learning Reps

Since the start of the project, we have recruited eleven local people to become "Learning Reps". These volunteers come from different areas, academic achievements and experiences, but all are committed to promoting learning in our community. Supported by monthly meetings, they play a key role in taking information out into the community and feeding back to the learning providers. Eight have now achieved a Level 2 OCN Learning in Our Community qualification.

Fourteen-year-old Rednock School pupil Beth Weeks has recently become the youngest Learning Rep. She says: "I know it's sometimes difficult for young people when they leave Rednock to get to college in Stroud, Gloucester and Bristol because the public transport is not good. So I think it's important we have learning and training places in Dursley and Cam so people can do things locally."

Working in partnership

Strong partnerships have been made with a wide range of local organisations including Stroud College (Dursley Education Centre), GP surgeries, Rednock School, GL11 Community Project, Next Step, the Youth Service and Stroud Valleys Project in a bid to create more local learning and training opportunities.

"The Learning Community has enabled and engaged many learners in our local community this past year with a full calendar of events and activities across the GL11 district and beyond. The partnership between the GL11 Community project and the TLC gives local people the chance to learn new skills on their doorstep.

"The difference that TLC has made is demonstrated in the number of people getting involved in learning who would not have done so otherwise... Long may this partnership continue" - **Marilyn McKechnie, GL11 Community Project**

"Stroud College has benefited enormously through working in close partnership with The Learning Community. The College is now widening the range of

learning and training opportunities it offers people in the Cam and Dursley area and looking at new ways of attracting new learners.

"The TLC has helped attract over a hundred new learners in the last year, many attending courses in computing, languages, assertiveness, Tai chi and other short courses. In the recent College inspection, the Adult Learning Inspectorate highlighted this focus on Dursley as a strength" - **Anne Lewellen, Stroud College**

"I have been pleased to see the progress that TLC has made in Cam and Dursley and I am proud to be associated with it.

"I was honoured to be asked to make the presentations to award winners at Dursley Festival earlier this year. Every award winner had a highly personalised story to tell about how they returned to study, what they had got out of it and what it will mean for their future life. Their ages ranged from teenagers to pensioners and it was a real inspiration to hear the stories and to re-discover your own roots of learning.

"I have been so impressed by what TLC has achieved in such a short time and I wish it every success in what will be a glowing future" - **David Drew MP**

"The Learning Community has effectively brought together a range of partners and encouraged collaborative working... Having begun a number of projects which are already making a difference locally, we believe the TLC still has lots more to offer the people in our community.

"In June 2005 Rednock School declared its intention to become a full-service extended school and the TLC is supporting this aim in numerous ways. The initiative has been a catalyst for educational developments in the Cam and Dursley area" - **Joyce Holborow, Rednock School**

Next Issue

If you would like to contribute to our next issue, please send your copy/photos/stories to:
louise@thelearningcommunity.org.uk

For more information about TLC call Jane Manning on 01453 547329, email **jane@thelearningcommunity.org.uk** or write to TLC, GL11 Community Project, Fairmead, Cam, GL11 5JS.

www.thelearningcommunity.org.uk



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