



...a better place to live and work

Two years on...



Welcome to this special edition of **The Learning Community's** Newsletter celebrating the project's second birthday. Over the past two years, we have been working to develop a vibrant, thriving Learning Community in Cam and Dursley based on the needs of local

residents, young people and employers. This has involved raising the profile of learning, engaging more local people as learners and 'Learning Champions', and putting on courses relevant to local needs at accessible venues.

Born out of a Government initiative that was piloted in only 28 areas in the country, the project has gone beyond its original 18 months life span and continues to go from strength to strength. New funding has been secured to carry us through until August 2007 ensuring that the progress already made can be built upon. Please contact us for more information or if you would like to see a specific course put on in the area.

Telephone: 01453 547329

info@thelearningcommunity.org.uk

www.thelearningcommunity.org.uk

THANK YOU!

We would like to take this opportunity to say a BIG 'thank you' to all our Learning Champions and partner organisations whose hard work and commitment to the project have made it so successful and ensured its continuation for another year.

More local learners!

Since the initiative was launched in October 2004, over 2100 learners in the GL11 area have been on courses supported by TLC in some way. Over 480 local people have been encouraged to start a learning course for the first time since leaving school, with about half already moving on to Level 2 qualifications and over a quarter progressing to Level 3.

Skills For Life...

Over the past year we have particularly concentrated on improving 'Skills for Life' provision – giving people the

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opportunity to brush up their English and/or Maths skills and gain a national qualification equivalent to GCSE level. TLC brought 'Test the Town' to Cam and

**TEST THE
TOWN**

Dursley, challenging local people to take practice tests in English and Maths at a range of fun events designed to raise awareness. Participants were then signposted to follow-on courses where they could sit the actual tests and gain real qualifications. A range of incentives were also offered including free swim passes, discounts at local shops and tourist attractions, a free computer data-stick, and much more.

Whether taken to fill a gap in a CV, improve confidence in the workplace or when helping children with homework, these free courses proved very popular and over 200 people have now taken the National Tests. The 'Skills for Life' drop-in sessions at Dursley Education Centre were very well attended and Stroud College have now designated a 'Skills For Life' Co-ordinator for Cam and Dursley. An 'Information, Advice and Guidance' session has also be made available to all prospective students to guide them to appropriate courses.

A special mention should also go to David Drew MP who has greatly supported this initiative. David joined a group of local learners and took both tests at a 'Test the Town' event in February. He went on to write about this in his weekly column in 'The Citizen':

"This splendid drive to encourage people of all ages and educational backgrounds to return to study to improve their basic communication and numeracy skills is to be greatly welcomed..."

"Taking these tests got me thinking again about the importance of education to us today...learning is far too important to be used as a political football. That is why it is vital to keep giving all, from the very youngest to those in their latter years a reason to study..."

"There is a long way to go, but I am always impressed by the learning experiences of others, especially those who have had to fight through every barrier in order to achieve. If just one person goes on or back to education as a result of this Learning Challenge then it will all be worthwhile...Sadly too many have missed out in the past and though I never accept the words of the doomsters, investing at all levels of education must be our highest priority." **David Drew MP**

Working in partnership

Over the past two years strong partnerships have been forged with a range of local organisations in a bid to create more local learning and training opportunities. We now have 99 partners including

Stroud College (Dursley Education Centre), GP surgeries, Rednock School, GL11 Community Project, Vale Vision, Next Step, Youth Service, Connexions, drug advisory groups, the police, Dursley Town Council, the Children's Centre, local primary schools, Stroud Valleys Project and the Sports Centre.

The newly-formed 'Cam and Dursley YOUTH PARTNERSHIP'

(brought together by TLC) is proving hugely successful. Thanks to a £20,000 grant from Gloucestershire County Council's Extended



Services, a fantastic series of events for young people entitled **'Summer Off the Streets'** took place in August and September. This project was also about consulting with young people and their parents to find out what they were doing already and what new activities and venues they wanted in the area. Over 600 young people benefited from the project, attending a range of events:

- **Looking Good Feeling Great** – a 5 week course, (one day a week) particularly aimed at teenage girls, based around providing health and fitness activities combined with beauty therapy and massage.
- **Scratch N SK8 Festival** – a three-day festival showcasing an array of bands and solo artists from the regionally acclaimed right through to bands just starting out on their journeys to stardom. Coupled with henna tattooing, felt making, inflatable quasar, human table football and much more, for the 250 plus young people who attended, boredom was not an option!
- **Summer Funtastic at GL11** - a 4 week programme (one day a week) for children aged between 6 and 14. It included African drumming, art walks, computers, digital photography, arts & crafts and a trip out bowling.
- **Workshops at Rednock School** – Including drama, dance and visual arts.
- **World Jungle's Fun on the Field** – Three events took place in parks across Cam and Dursley offering cartoon drawing, henna tattoos, fruit cocktails, live drumming using African instruments, Hip Hop, circus skills and a Ghanaian Acrobat, Nii Black Wanda, who gave an amazing fire show (pictured above with young people from Woodfields).



Black Wanda, who gave an amazing fire show (pictured above with young people from Woodfields).

A HEALTHY LIVING PARTNERSHIP lead by Cam GP Doctor Martin Freeman has also recently been established and is another good example of successful partnerships being formed to benefit local people. The multi-agency group will be holding various meetings over the coming months each with a different focus including education, healthy activities and emotional wellbeing. It is hoped that from each meeting new joint projects and funding bids can be developed.

Learning Champions

Our 'Learning Champions' have been recognised at national level for their work. We currently have 11

local people working as "Learning Champions" for The Learning Community. These volunteers come from different areas, academic achievements and experiences, but all are committed to promoting learning in our community. Their work has been crucial to the success of The Learning Community and fundamental in securing the continuation of the project as indicated by David Combie, Head of Access and Inclusion for the DfES (Department for Education and Skills):

"At a national level, the Dept. for Education and Skills has welcomed the recent indications that the Testbed Learning Communities are serving a real purpose, and that many of them will continue in existence beyond March 2006 when start up funding officially ends.

" A case in point is Cam and Dursley where new funding has been won on the back of the excellent work being done by Learning Champions. Learning Champions have been highly effective in raising aspirations and widening participation. In Cam and Dursley the Champions, each equipped with a laptop, signpost local residents to learning opportunities that suit their needs, and help them overcome the obstacles that face adult learners."

Dursley Town Festival 2006

Over 2000 people have attended events and taster sessions organised by The Learning Community.

One of the highlights of the year was the Dursley Town Festival in July. Visitors to our stands were encouraged to 'have a go' at activities ranging from African Drumming and juggling to computers and community art. David Drew MP rose to our challenge giving drumming and juggling a go. The 'Cocktail Crew' (lead by our youngest Learning Champion, Rednock student Beth Weeks – pictured above with Tasha Johanson) made healthy fruit cocktails that proved so successful they sold out! There was a wonderful display of work from the Digital Photography course and our Learning Champions were on hand with information on how to find out more about local training and learning opportunities. Thank you to everyone who came along and gave their support. The whole event was so successful that we are already working with the DTF Committee to plan something even bigger for next summer!



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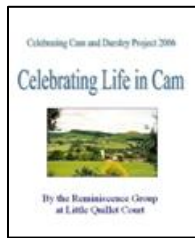
Celebrating Cam & Dursley

A project managed by The Learning Community to celebrate our local area is now well under way.

'Celebrating Cam and Dursley' aims to engage the local community by reaching across age barriers to celebrate what is special about the area in which we live. Funding has been awarded from the Countryside Agency and Adult Education to undertake a variety of tasks ranging from developing a Heritage Trail and community art, to

reminiscence (collecting memories) and conservation work. Please visit www.camanddursley.com to find out more.

Two booklets have been produced and are available to download from the website. They collate memories from residents of Little Quillet Court in Cam and visitors to the Glebe House Day Centre, Cam. The booklets are a fascinating read with stories about people's lives in Cam and Dursley, why they came here, what they did and how they have seen the area change. Local traditions, songs and recipes are also included.



A book of local walks is currently being put together for which local people have been asked to nominate their favourite walks. It is hoped that this will also tie in with a proposed event for May next year – a 'National Trails Festival'. This would take the form of people walking the Cotswold Way from Chipping Campden, Wotton under Edge or further a field and meeting in Dursley for some form of festival to be held in a marquee on the recreation ground. Keep posted for further details!

Pieces of community art have also been produced and will form part of a local heritage trail – one to be displayed on the Lower Kingshill Estate in Dursley and another at Uley Village Hall.

Lower Kingshill's 24-foot mural has been painted by pupils from Cam Everlands School under the guidance of local artist Wendy Thompson. It depicts the dramatic landscape of Dursley and Cam and silhouettes of local residents. The initial image for the mural came from a series of photographs taken by local amateur photographer and TLC Learning Champion, Dave Line. Commenting on the mural, Ian Dixon, Head of Cam Everlands school, said: "...it had two real benefits – it helped us build even stronger links with our local community as many of our families will see the mural in place every day, and we wanted the children to get more involved in making and doing things."



In Uley, children from the Toddler Group, Playgroup and primary school were asked to think about what they felt was special about where they lived. Uley Artist, Amanda Griffiths (pictured right) then used these images as inspiration for a clay mural made from hand-tiles created by the children. The finished mural will be displayed on the side of Uley Village Hall.



Left: Capturing the beauty of our area. Dave Line's inspirational photograph.

Click on-line!

The Learning Community's website has had over 2,000 hits! Visit www.thelearningcommunity.org.uk for 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 skills!

TLC move to The Library

2006 saw The Learning Community move to the fantastic new library in Dursley. If you would like to come in and meet us for advice on learning and training in the area, our office is on the second floor and is open on Thursdays 10am-4pm. Take the opportunity to visit the new library too - offering a wide range of services including many more books, local information, CDs/DVDs to hire, an internet café and 12 computers with free internet access.



Changing lives...

Learning change lives. Successful trials of two new courses in Dursley supported by The Learning Community – one aimed at women returning to work, the other at over-45's looking for a career change – means that both are running again this Autumn in Dursley.

The 'Move-On' course aims to help women achieve more out of life. This free, day-time course was devised as a 'first step' back in to education or employment. A number of the learners from the original course have now moved on to further training. Here is what some had to say:

"I use what I learn in class at home with my kids."

"I didn't do well at school and I thought I could never get a good job. Now I know that I've got lots to offer!"

"My family have noticed I am much more confident now"

Please contact Emma Clark at Dursley Education Centre on 01453 542060 for more information.

The current business start-up course is very well attended. The 3-day free course is being run by the Stroud Enterprise Centre. Although open to everyone, the course is particularly aimed at over 45's looking to turn their lives around and go into business. A local millionaire has even agreed to take part in the 'Dragon's Den' activity at the end of the course!

'Facts4Life' is another current project hoping to bring about positive change. This pilot scheme is being run at Rednock School with sixth form students. Local GP, Dr Hugh van't Hoff devised the course programme based around the theory that the more we understand about disease and how our bodies work, the more responsibility we can take for our own health by making informed decisions.

Next Issue

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

For more information on The Learning Community, please contact Jane Manning, TLC Project Manager on 01453 547329, jane@thelearningcommunity.org.uk or write to TLC, Second Floor, Dursley Library, May Lane, Dursley, Glos. GL11 4JH.



GOVERNMENT OFFICE
FOR THE SOUTH WEST

Thank you for your support



We provide a wide range of services to the local community in Cam and Dursley ranging from baby care and toddler sessions, to gardening services, learning opportunities, social events, walking groups and after-school clubs.

A warm & friendly welcome guaranteed!

GL11 Community Project
Fairmead, Cam, Gloucestershire. GL11 5JS
Tel: 01453 548 530
Email: office@gl11.org.uk www.gl11.org.uk



World Jungle is about using music, dance, arts and the environment to make a positive difference in your life.

Our focus is upon developing cultural awareness and understanding issues of diversity and identity by offering a range of workshops and activities in the following areas:

- African Dance and Music
- Street/Break-dance and Music
- Cultural Arts
- Citizenship, Identity and Diversity
- Visits to cultural centres / events
- Talks by cultural experts
- Eco-tourism to villages throughout Africa

Please contact Jane or Ben on 01453 548189 or email info@worldjungle.org.uk www.worldjungle.org.uk

THE LEARNING COMMUNITY



CAM • DURSLEY

...a better place to live and work

www.thelearningcommunity.org.uk



Vale Vision is a community led enterprise whose aims include improving and enhancing the quality of life of the inhabitants of Cam, Dursley and the surrounding parishes.

Working For The Future
of Cam, Dursley & District

Our premises are well-equipped and available to hire for meetings or training events. If you would like to work on community projects, in the Vale Vision premises, need work experience or would like to undertake an NVQ completely free of charge, please contact us.

Vale Vision Development Trust Ltd
28 Long Street, Dursley, Glos. GL11 4HX
Tel/Fax: 01453 544933
Email: valevision@btconnect.com
VISIT OUR WEBSITE: www.valevision.org.uk



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For more information, contact Paula Atkinson at Dursley Education Centre on 01453 542060 or paulaatkinson@stroudcol.ac.uk

Visit www.stroud.ac.uk for course details