

surrey lifelong learning partnership

Start Living Through Learning



INVESTORS
IN PEOPLE | Gold



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FOREWORD FROM OUR CEO KEVIN DELF

Surrey Lifelong Learning Partnership (SLLP) works with its partners to ensure that those who have missed out on learning in the past, have opportunities to learn and to reach their full potential.



SLLP has always been interested in those people not benefiting from a large menu of adult education, who they were, why it was, what were the barriers, for example. In the early days we were perhaps better at defining the problems than seeing solutions for those who were in the most precarious situations in society: the long-term unemployed, the homeless, adolescents leaving care homes, addicts, families suffering from domestic violence, Asian women isolated and not speaking English, people with disabilities, people with learning difficulties both in residential homes and living in the community, people with mental health difficulties. How far were we really addressing the needs of those most beset with barriers, those leading chaotic lives, where learning seemed a hopeless dream?

So we had to change tack and that has involved looking for new forms of collaboration: with charities, for example, and with public service organisations whose remit brought them regularly in touch with the people we felt we needed to support. In these new relationships we particularly wanted to make sure that learning was kept at the centre of the solutions.

‘Start Living Through Learning’ tells the story of what is working in developing projects and social enterprises which will continue engage those who are hard to reach in learning valued by the community. It illustrates perfectly how funding invested can be made to count for many times its face value.

We hope this document illustrates what can be achieved through partnership and stimulates further innovation. We are grateful to the many partners and funders who have made this all possible (see acknowledgements).



Digital Citizen's Project



In the UK there are 10 million people without access to the Internet, four million among the most socially and economically disadvantaged, 39% over the age of 65 years and 38% unemployed. One third of all households do not have the Internet and one in four adults have never used the Internet. Meanwhile the Internet and digital technology command ever greater aspects of our lives.

Sponsored by the Nominet Trust, supported by on-line materials developed by The Tinder Foundation, the Digital Citizen's Project, since September 2011, has been taking the fear out of all things digital for the over-65s in Ash, Epsom and Pirbright; for parents in Sunbury, Sheerwater, Englefield Green, Camberley and Stanwell; for army communities in Sandhurst, Arborfield, Deepcut and Pirbright; for the unemployed in Maybury & Sheerwater, Staines, Stanwell, Camberley and Guildford; and for mental health groups and the homeless in Woking and Guildford. The Project also integrates with job clubs and some of the other programmes mentioned in this booklet.

Co-ordinated by Linda Charlton and delivered by tutors, the Project does not depend upon a minimum number signed up, or a fixed location, or inflexible hours or a need to show clear routes of progression. Wherever there is a place to plug in, the technology is transported in: lap tops, a mobile wi-fi hub catering for six or more laptops if Internet access is required, and a projector.

Frequently urgent problems have to be solved. An unemployed woman who has been required to use Universal Jobmatch has to enter an email address to renew the password. She is anxious to provide evidence that she has been seeking a realistic job opportunity. The tutor takes an hour to sort it out, finding out what the problem is, visiting the site, looking at the way passwords are changed, and taking the woman through it step by step. The Digital Citizen's Project has time and expertise to overcome such hurdles.

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And still the technology advances: Wi-fi, SMART phones, Windows 8. The Project has just received its first tablets. The software needs to be upgraded or replaced. Wherever a group or centre want to install wi-fi the Project will help them. Wi-fi mobile hubs provide a short-term solution. Success depends on flexibility. The technology has to move around the county. The tutors oversee nervous learners taking their first steps. The curriculum (Learn My Way) is developing rapidly to meet the needs of the learner. The Project works with community groups, setting up workshops and learning communities. Places like the Job

Club in Maybury and the Phoenix Cultural Centre, who attract some of the most nervous learners, are vital to the Project's success. Their community support workers play a vital role. We are increasingly involved with job-seekers. Some have tried and despaired of ever getting a job.

The Project can become the stable part of an otherwise chaotic week, providing someone to talk through a series of problems. Success at IT learning brings relief and hope. Learners can take a qualification, but many associate certification with past failures. Those who overcome their fear of tests often find they do better than they thought. One man who got 75% in his first certificate said, 'I have never got 75% for anything in my life.'

The Project seeks to instil responsibility for one's own learning.'

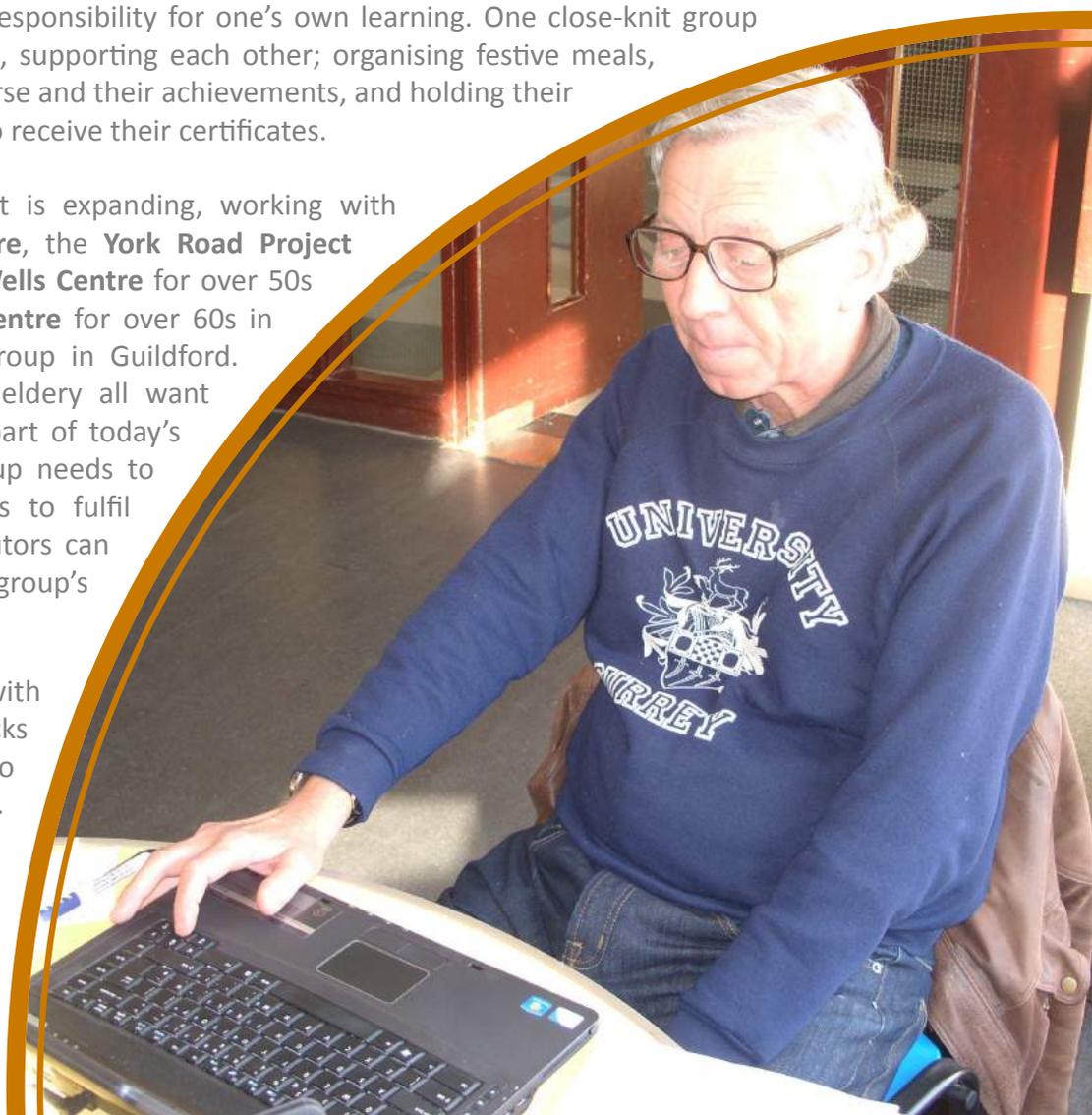
The Project has run joint courses with North East Surrey College of Technology (NESCOL) but colleges cannot, as we can, work with small numbers due to their funding constraints. You frequently get someone saying, 'I have to come here or I won't get my money. Would you please write my CV for me.' No, but we can help you to write your own CV. We say we are a charity, independent of any body with influence over their benefits. It helps establish a sympathetic relationship, one only about helping to develop skills and improve the quality of life.

The tutors are qualified and experienced teachers who work flexibly. They collect, transport and set up the hardware wherever it is needed. They improvise if the technology collapses, get the best out of people who are nervous or under stress or disabled or have memory loss, are good listeners, and make allowances for people not ready to learn. It is extremely skilful work.

The Project seeks to instil responsibility for one's own learning. One close-knit group is the Nepalese army wives, supporting each other; organising festive meals, celebrating the end of a course and their achievements, and holding their own presentation evening to receive their certificates.

The Digital Citizen's Project is expanding, working with the **Phoenix Cultural Centre**, the **York Road Project** for homeless people, the **Wells Centre** for over 50s in Epsom, the **Shawfield Centre** for over 60s in Ash, the **Forget-me-nots** group in Guildford. The unemployed and the elderly all want to use the Internet to be part of today's digital world but each group needs to be accessing different sites to fulfil their requirements. The tutors can adapt the course for each group's particular needs.

The Project has worked with the NHS doing health checks and with Travel SMART to improve transport choices. Each partner brings its expertise to the wider community's needs.



ETHOS Project



The hardest learners to reach are the homeless, so why not help those at risk of homelessness? ETHOS (Employment, Training and Housing Options Support) is a unique project that links securing living accommodation to finding employment, training or education. The partners who created this project are five borough/district councils (Elmbridge, Guildford, Mole Valley, Epsom & Ewell, and Tandridge), and three housing associations (Circle Housing, Paragon Community Housing Group Limited and Rosebery Housing Association). The clients are either referred by the housing associations or other groups or they can self-refer.

Surrey Lifelong Learning Partnership learning and careers advisers working on this programme are Lorraine Thompson, full-time, and Nina Selfe and Femi Yusoof, part-time. They work with anyone living in one of the five borough/district councils who is unemployed or working fewer than 16 hours a week with insecure housing accommodation: the homeless, people in private rented accommodation faced with eviction, people struggling with mortgage repayments, people living in hostels. They might be a dependent adult, someone capable of working but not working and therefore not contributing to the household. They could be on Job Seekers Allowance, Employment Support Allowance, or income support. They could be a lone parent or a person over 50 years of age who has been made redundant or someone with a health condition putting them at a disadvantage in employment seeking. Many have mental health needs.

A one-to-one appointment with an adviser leads to job workshops and support using the internet and emails. Support continues as long as clients show commitment to resolve their situation. Beneficiaries feel they can now move forward, develop skills, move into jobs, improve their housing options and expect a brighter future. By the end of the project's third year, 770 people have been referred, of whom 75% actually engaged, of these 26% secured a job, and of these 74% retained their job more than 3 months and 58% retained their job more than 6 months. In the last quarter of 2012, 25 local people referred to ETHOS secured employment. Three-month job sustainment figures are currently tracking at 71% against the project's key performance indicator of 70%. Six-month job sustainment figures are currently tracking at 56% against a KPI of 60%.

The advisers work alongside housing officers but do not themselves advise on housing issues. Housing difficulties make it hard to maintain a continuous link with the project. Clients might even move out of the

district. But the connection between helping solve the housing difficulty and improvement of opportunities for work, training and learning provides a strong incentive to stay with the programme.

The need for this service has increased since changes in benefits. People in the most precarious situations find it even more difficult to solve their problems. Sometimes they do not understand the new benefit system well enough to realise they qualify for exemptions. ETHOS can clarify this and thus release stress for the client. The strengths of ETHOS lie in its success helping people back into training and employment. Because funding is secure, advisers can take a long term approach with each client and find better resolutions for ever more challenging life situations.

A chaotic life makes it difficult to fulfil obligations: attending meetings, appointments, and job clubs. *“Often I feel as though I am being asked to be the person’s mum, social worker, and counsellor all wrapped up into one,”* says Nina. *“You are meeting people at the lowest ebb in their lives. One man became homeless after taking a job as a trouble-shooter in a failing pub. He turned the pub round, the owner sold it and, as the client lived in the flat above the pub, he became homeless. As a lone, mature man he is a low priority in the benefits system behind lone parents and people with health conditions. He broke down in my office, because he had just had his dog put down. He had been sleeping rough for two or three months. But he is now housed and I am helping him to find work.”*

Establishing a rapport is essential. *“I tell them I work for a charity, so they know my role is independent from local authorities, housing associations and JobCentre Plus,”* says Lorraine. Advisers and clients can work one-to-one, helping them back on their feet and finding a route back into training, learning and employment. *“With a group of young people, I go in to their youth club and play table tennis with them,”* says Femi. *“I reckon that I can make a connection with anyone. I am relaxed. I smile. That is what I do.”*

Case loads are usually 30 or at most 40 per adviser. *“I love working on this project. I engage. I mentor. I actually get on and do it,”* says Femi. *“That’s not so easy with a caseload of 100. But in ETHOS the adviser can write a realistic plan of action with the client that has some hope of success. ‘These things we need to do, these things you have actually achieved.’”*

ETHOS fills a gap in provision. No one else is addressing these clients in this particular way. Through meeting these challenges, the advisers are learning valuable skills to use to boost the chances of success for their future clients in housing distress.



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“My life changed for the better when I got a job. The ETHOS Project helped me when I most needed it”.

a former client, now in work.

The Maybury & Sheerwater Job Club



The Maybury and Sheerwater Job Club meets on Wednesdays between 12.30 and 2.30 pm at the Maybury Centre. It advertises support with writing a CV, finding out about barriers that hold you back, breaking into the hidden job market, using the internet for job searches, learning interview skills and techniques, and computer training. The Surrey Lifelong Learning Partnership has helped it first to survive and then to flourish by finding new forms of funding and through the work of Elaine McGinty.

The Club provides opportunities for job seekers to receive information, advice and guidance, to develop action plans, to undertake training, to develop IT skills, to receive training in other pre-employment skills and to have access to information, support and resources to help find work, volunteer or engage in further training. People can be referred by Job Centre Plus. Corner House, a mental health facility run by Woking MIND, and the Children's Centre also refer people.

Surrey Lifelong Learning Partnership co-ordinates the Club and three facilitators attend: one to assist digital inclusion (funded by the Nominet Trust), the second as a career coach (on a SLLP freelance contract) and a third from the National Careers Service to run workshops on CV writing, interview skills and the hidden jobs market. The Club is attended by between 15 and 20 people who drop in or attend regularly. The trainers model the qualities that people will need to have if they are to gain employment: professional behaviour, being punctual and finishing at a set time.

On first walking through the door, the client is greet by the Co-ordinator and asked a few questions before being introduced to how the Club can help. By meeting one of the advisers an initial assessment takes place and an agreed plan of action written. It is important to help the newcomer to relax and have a

chance to explain how they are feeling, what their experience and skills are and what aspects they need training in. The assessment always focuses on learning need. Apart from the workshops, the help is given on a one-to-one basis. The co-ordinators and advisers make sure that everyone attending gets their share of attention. There are always delicate matters to address: for example, time management, appropriate dress for work, difficulties with basic skills, helping people who have moved off Disability Living Allowance or Employment Support Allowance onto Jobseekers' Allowance to understand the job search process. It is important to bring in relevant partner organisations for support as well as additional learning elsewhere. The Club fosters relationships with local businesses to get support and interview practice for clients.

'The tutors are there to support people in solving employment and learning problems for themselves..'

Cases are reviewed and plans of action are changed to match the circumstances, particularly when a person has not attended sessions or when a person has been coming a long time and needs to re-focus. Clients are followed-up to map progression routes and to see whether they need further support.

The Club undertakes outreach sessions where groups can focus on confidence building and workplace readiness. Elaine says, "A major challenge is tackling the negative feelings people have based on past failures in learning. It is as if they do not have the confidence to be adult in a situation that reminds them of being a child when they may not have had encouragement or felt listened to." The tutors are friendly and empathetic but they expect their clients to take responsibility. It is a fine line to draw. The tutors are there to support people in solving employment and learning problems for themselves.

Maybury and Sheerwater Job Club has been very successful at moving people on, so that they are willing and able to take tailored learning programmes and build up their confidence and skills in order to take their place in the job market. With encouragement, the clients have set up a Friendship Group outside of the Job Club which they run in order to support each other and cover other life skills not necessarily directly linked to Job Searching.

Photography: Grahame Larter, Working Advertiser



The Bike Project



The Bike Project is a social enterprise refurbishing donated bikes and selling them. The workers come from the Westborough and Stoke wards of Guildford, areas that statistically are among the four most disadvantaged in Surrey. A fully operational workshop in Bellfields has been making over 1,800 bikes road worthy and they are being sold at the rate of 15 bikes a week. It is managed by John Thurlow of SLLP.

Three years ago John started setting up work clubs in Park Bark and Stoke, taking referrals of unemployed people from the local Job Centre Plus. Not everybody was ready for work because of low skills, having nothing to put on their CVs and confidence at rock bottom. The SLLP started talking to Guildford Borough Council about creating a social enterprise. In December 2011 during a meeting in Millmead a policeman mentioned that they had unclaimed bikes and asked whether they might be of any use. Steve Benbough, Guildford's Policy and Partnership Officer, took this up and the enterprise began.

Driven by Surrey Lifelong Learning Partnership, The Bike Project had its own premises, staff, business model, policies and procedures, in under six months. The steering group John describes as "a melting pot of talent". There was a market for bikes, though no market research was undertaken. The launch on 16 May 2012 coincided with the cycling triumphs at the London Olympics. It attracted the attention of the Youth Service, the local Mental Health Team, housing associations and hostels for the homeless. Volunteers started to arrive in droves. Within a year The Bike Project touched the lives of 88 people: beneficiaries, volunteers, work experience trainees or just people turning up to help. The SLLP is a charity so those helping the enterprise knew it was giving work to those who needed it and all profits from sales would be reinvested.

Steve Benbough found the premises for the workshop and store on a site derelict for some 25 years. Guildford Borough Council had it cleared out and made safe and donated a van. The Probation Service decorated it. Surrey County Council provided £7,000 to equip it, pay for the decorating and pay for the insurance of the premises, the equipment and the van. The Bike Project has a five year lease on a peppercorn rent.

The shop is also on a five year lease. The shop and the flat above will be refurbished, supported by a £40,000 grant from Travel SMART at Surrey County Council. The flat is expected to contribute £1,000 a month to support The Bike Project, very necessary because in its 18 months of existence this social enterprise has been heavily subsidised by its partners, notably Guildford Borough Council, Surrey County Council (via Travel SMART) and the Surrey Lifelong Learning Partnership with its provision of a 0.8 part-time manager, as well as by the donation of bikes from Guildford Police and the public. SLLP have also given a lot of time in co-ordinating The Bike Project from its inception.

The SLLP have negotiated with Guildford College to deliver accredited learning. The College is registered as an Institute of Motor Industries Centre (IMI), which is the industry standard organisation. The Bike Project has registered as a satellite centre for the College. That has been approved and checked for health

and safety purposes. The college is accrediting four of the mentor supervisors to deliver the IMI courses on the College's behalf. The mentors will be observed by external verifiers, take a theory course and sit a formal test. The college will draw down the funding and administer the certification. The college will pay sessional tutor fees to the mentors. Once the skills training and the information and advice elements are added at the shop from Guildford College and Travel SMART, we will see how far The Bike Project will go in improving the quality of life and the opportunities for further employment and education.

Beneficiaries have been from age 16 to 75 years, but it has been particularly life changing for the 16 to 30 age group, those who have failed to get started in employment: of the 30 who have taken up bike maintenance training, 12 have gone into full time employment or education. But there have been other beneficiaries: older unemployed people, the retired and semi-retired, people with learning disabilities and people with health problems, including mental health issues. One third of the people who come into the shop or work in the workshop and store are from needy families, people who need a cheap roadworthy form of transport: a bike to get to a job interview, for example. Another third are university students, who receive a £10 discount. About 50 bikes have already gone to students. The final third are residents from outside the areas of Westborough or Stoke, who want to support the project. Most intriguing of all is the connection made between the younger age group and people aged 50 to 75 years who have skills and experiences to draw on and are looking for a new challenge. About 80 people have contributed time and commitment to refurbishing the bikes, a few as the trainers and supervisors of the many. Some have stayed and become a part of the workforce as volunteers, whereas some have made the transition to employment, education and training elsewhere. The next challenge for The Bike Project is to become

'Beneficiaries have been from age 16 to 75 years, but it has been particularly life changing for the 16 to 30 age group...'

financially independent. Even though about £35,000 worth of bikes have been sold, The Bike Project is still being financially supported by SLLP. The maintenance of bikes is successful because with the majority of the workforce being volunteers, overheads are kept to a minimum and these savings are passed onto consumers through competitive prices. Loss-making is not apparent at the moment because of the generosity of partners, especially in the start-up donations given by the borough and county councils and the staffing involvement provided by Surrey Lifelong Learning Partnership. This 'free' contribution will be extended once Guildford College and Travel SMART take up their offices within the shop. The SLLP also has to manage unrealistic expectations from those wishing to engage the services of The Bike Project. The Project has benefited from time (and bikes) given freely, which has helped to keep costs low. But there are irreducible costs and the business cannot afford to run at a loss. If its good work is to expand in the future, it needs to provide partners with a realistic cost analysis that explains clearly what can be provided freely and what has to be paid for.

It is urgent to start the refurbishment of the shop at 109 Southway so it will have a smart commercial presence in Westborough. Without this, Guildford College, Travel SMART and Job Centre Plus cannot bring their contribution to the heart of the community. The Bellfields workshop will be refurbished to expand from five to ten work stations, and will purchase a portacabin to provide for an office and increased learning space. The Bike Project will strengthen its relationships with Social Services, the Mental Health Team, the Local Crime Prevention Framework for 14 to 16 year olds, the Probation Service, Employability and other charities.

Guildford Borough Council are exploring other avenues for social enterprises in north and west Guildford. A promotional film was made presenting several of our young people working on The Bike Project which helped raise more than £25,000 for these developments. This new initiative is working closely with the Community Foundation for Surrey, from which fund we are applying for a grant to expand capacity at the Bellfields workshop and provide a second van to convert into a mobile workshop to take to other areas.

The Phoenix Cultural Centre



Located next to Job Centre Plus in Woking, The Phoenix Cultural Centre's start up premises hosts its core activities of musical performances and other cultural events. Started as a monthly music night, it now is available seven days a week to the community. Its workers are volunteers. You can hire the Centre on affordable rates. "We are attracting people who would otherwise go up to London for a night out," says Elaine McGinty, who manages the project.



The project is looking to utilise a large empty building in the town to make a fit for purpose music venue and cultural centre and are asking Woking Borough Council to assist them in identifying and securing the building. The business plan has been submitted to show how it can work towards sustainability, regeneration is a major theme in Woking nowadays and The Phoenix plays its part. Elaine says one function of current start up at The Phoenix is as a 'footprint', an appraisal of need by looking at why people come through its doors. The Phoenix helped a lady recovering from a stroke via music therapy. Volunteers record the name and what they want to see happen there, a web-site captures people's interest.

Elaine says, "We attract a wide variety of people and it is a safe place for those who are vulnerable or very nervous. We run an open mic night for people like that to come along and share their work." Elaine spoke at the Live Music Industry UK Summit on 17th October – they called the project innovative.

Surrey Lifelong Learning Partnership helped develop the start up of The Phoenix and sits on its steering group. The Phoenix also provided musical performances at the SLLP's Adult Learners' Week celebration. Performers from The Phoenix have taken part in the Bandstand Marathon 2012, Our Big Gig 2013 and

2014 both national celebrations, Woking's first Food Festival, and a Punk/Ska/Northern Soul festival in the town as well as the World Wildlife Fund first Earth Hour celebrations in their new Living Planet Centre HQ based in Woking for 2014.

Elaine will register The Phoenix as a community interest company to retain control of its values and how it is run, but with the same access to grants as charities. Kevin Delf advises: "Be positive about your idea, changing your business plan to reflect other agendas can weaken what you are able to achieve. Bear in mind that many social enterprises derive from the public's frustration with the status quo, so it is important to keep on your chosen track."

Musical performance engages people in learning and increases confidence and feelings of wellbeing. The Phoenix helped a lady with her internet learning by playing relaxing music which improved her performance and experience. SLLP bring various kinds of learning to the venue, such as the Digital Citizen's Project, Confidence Building and Workplace Readiness courses. Job Centre Plus refers job seekers who are encouraged to join the job club or seek training.

The Phoenix is a hub for information about cultural activity and learning elsewhere. Charities drop their leaflets and book the premises for events. It has attracted organisations researching how cultural activity can make a difference. For example, someone working in Borough Market has done an investigation on The Phoenix. There have been poems written about the The Phoenix and organisers have networked with other venues and promoters in the South East to share talent.

Musical groups start up from The Phoenix. One now performs all over Surrey. There have been musical master-classes; a group has made a CD of their music; they met up with another group who now are their support act. Musicians learn from other musicians.

There have been other kinds of interesting workshops: a job club booking for tai chi classes; writing workshops; a sound healing workshop; a mindfulness workshop; a table top sale. The Surrey Minority Ethnic Forum hire the premises.

When it's quest for larger premises is fulfilled, the social enterprise can appoint a permanent CEO and a person to run day-to-day activities. Essential will remain the volunteers, people helping themselves through helping other people. Even people with good jobs and wealth can have mental health problems: rediscovering their creativity can reduce their pain and frustration and foster a love for life long learning. There will be a larger performance space, smaller rooms for other activities, a café, and a more extensive market strategy



Photography: Graeme Reeves

Travel SMART



Travel SMART is an initiative funded by the Department of Transport but administered by Surrey County Council that aims:

- (1) to help people make better travel choices,
- (2) to improve their employment skills and
- (3) to improve their health and well-being.

Local groups can apply for small grants up to £3,000 and for large grants up to £10,000. The Surrey Lifelong Learning Partnership have been awarded the contract to take the community support role in Westborough, Sheerwater & Maybury, Redhill West and Merstham encouraging local groups to make their own bids, then helping write the bid to have the best chance of success. Once successful, the SLLP continues to help in developing the project. The initiative started in 2012 and will continue until 2015.

Forget-me-not, a mental health support friendship group asked for and were awarded £184 to pay speakers' expenses. In the next round they put together a bid for £3,000. In the first year, groups could bid under any one or a combination of the three aims. But in the second year the third aim (on health and well-being) was made secondary to the other two. An individual who was anxious about the quality of life of his isolated aged father and the lack of lunch clubs, encouraged by SLLP, to bid for the very thing he saw was lacking, and connected up with other people who wanted the same thing. The learning journey of these groups to gain knowledge of bids helps their members develop skills to help others.

Interesting contacts have been made. A Nepalese group in Westborough turned out to be more in need of support from SLLP than needing to make a bid under TravelSMART, so they could be directed towards Surrey Community Action and Surrey Minority Ethnic Forum where they became a better constituted group and then found themselves in a position to bid for a programme funded by TravelSMART.

Once a bid has been written it is sent up to a panel at Surrey County Council who check whether it complies with the criteria for a TravelSMART funding award. All the bids that satisfy the criteria have are presented at a meeting in the local community who vote for the schemes they would like the funding to be spent on. This local community panel has the final say. A borough council decided an over-50s coffee shop had to become a social enterprise or close but it remains open on the back of a TravelSMART award. Similarly, a TravelSMART award helped save from closure a neighbourhood advice centre in Maybury.

Travel SMART allowed SLLP to replicate the success of a project in one part of the county somewhere else. The Bikes Revived shop in Merstham achieved this, using the model of The Bike Project in Westborough. Connections are made. In Merstham, TS Ambuscade, a group running a sea cadets branch for 8 to 17-year-olds, bid to run a cycling activity and they needed to purchase a pool of cycles, which they did from Bikes Revived.

All large grant applications have to go through a two-stage procedure. First the bid goes to a Surrey County Council panel to check that it satisfies the criteria for the award. If it does, it is presented with all other bids to a local community panel. For example, on 26th October 2013 a presentation evening was held in a school at Merstham. All community groups that get through the criteria qualification stage exhibited at the event, local people were able to go round and speak with the community groups, find out about their ideas and their action plans. Then each group gave a presentation, saying what benefits it would give and how the money will be spent. They had a question and answer session after each presentation. Bob Gardner, a local councillor attended. He put in an idea – part of their bike hire scheme should have electric bikes for those who have health issues. Travel SMART likes to hear ideas, and there are opportunities for the local people to write down their thoughts on post-its. In all, six community groups came along to make their presentations. For Merstham there was an overall pot of £60,000 to bid for in the large grant category. For the small grant a maximum of ten groups can make a bid and the overall pot is £30,000. If the bidding is for amounts lower than the maximum, then the surplus can roll over to the next round.

As a result of all this bidding activity, the community benefits and it helps to stimulate some economic growth. The level of enterprise and commitment in these disadvantaged communities has been impressive. It requires money certainly but above all collaboration and hard work. The Surrey Lifelong Learning Partnership takes the role of critical friend with the successful groups. It is important that each scheme works to professional standards and that groups competing for the same beneficiaries learn to work side by side or even collaboratively for the benefit of the whole community. Learning becomes embedded in communities as they see positive change within themselves.



Coming Soon...

A Community Hub for Westborough

The plan is to increase the confidence of local residents in building a stronger, more self-reliant community. The Hub at the centre of this aspiration is the shop at 109 Southway. A £40,000 grant from Travel SMART will enable the refurbishment of this shop so that the ground floor can be not only the retail outlet of The Bike Project but also a home for the Travel SMART advice programme, for the Guildford Community Job club, a skills shop for Guildford College and a basis for developing further social enterprises which are vehicles for learning like the Guildford Learning & Development Enterprise (GLADE).

This powerhouse of local activity will mean opportunities for residents

- to engage in volunteering,
- to receive advice on improving their travel choices and cutting carbon, calories and cost, information
- to get access to learning courses in the community
- to receive information, advice and guidance, and
- to take up positions in social enterprises designed to improve skills and employment possibilities

Surrey Lifelong Learning Partnership is managing this project and is working closely with its stakeholders: Travel SMART, Guildford College, and Guildford Borough Council, who have provided a 5 year lease on the premises. The only thing the SLLP is waiting for is a starting date from the architect and builders to carry out the refurbishment.

Guildford Learning & Development Enterprise (GLADE)

By the time this is published, some of the services will already have started on 1st December 2013. The rest will follow from 1st April 2014.

The services will include gardening for protected housing and Millmead, gardening services for the elderly and street cleaning. The focus is Westborough but some services will extend further afield in Guildford. The main objective is to provide opportunities for Westborough people to learn and develop new skills, thus improving their learning and their ability to find employment. There will be a part-time project manager and two full-time and one part-time supervisors. But the majority of those engaged will be apprentices or volunteers. Surrey Lifelong Learning Partnership is collaborating with Guildford Borough Council, Oakleaf Enterprise, and YMCA Guildford to turn the implementation plan into a reality.

Guildford Borough Council is playing a major part in the way this enterprise is set up, the provision of transport and machinery, and how it integrates into other borough services. Guildford College will take the leading role in developing qualification-based courses. As you can see, this is not a pipe-dream. It is actually starting to operate, as you are reading this!

A Retail Skills Shop in Woking

This initiative derives from Surrey Lifelong Learning Partnership's work with the Maybury Job Club. It is also a part of a strategy for regenerating the town. A number of big companies are coming into the area and they are looking for workers in retail.

A recent report has indicated that there is a shortage of skilled workers in retail, among other employment

categories. There is a need to develop retail skills amongst those who are referred for training and confidence building, hence the idea of opening a retail skills shop in Woking town centre. There is no intention to take over another premises at this stage. The assumption is that it will be located in the new premises provided for The Phoenix Cultural Centre.

This is only at the thinking stage at present. A presentation has been made in conjunction with Woking Community Learning Partnership to Woking Borough Council. The SLLP is looking to act as a broker between various agencies to get this idea off the ground. Elaine McGinty has been visiting similar initiatives in preparation. An important first step is to gain the support of the borough council.

Woking Borough Council say that they have commissioned an investigation into the retail skills shortage and are awaiting the report. They recommended that SLLP should hold off until the results are published. But SLLP has replied that waiting is not a good idea because the need is clearly present now. It is likely that the council will choose Sheerwater/Maybury as the area to focus on for this programme but SLLP would argue that it should be borough-wide as the need can be seen in central Woking, Old Woking and elsewhere.



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Adult Learners' Week•Anchor Staying Put•Bikes Revived•Brooklands College•Cargill Cares•Circle Housing•Community Learning Partnership members who have guided us in planning and community•Credit Suisse•Department of Transport•East Surrey Community Learning Partnership•Elmbridge Borough Council•Employability•Epsom & Ewell Borough Council•European Social Fund•Forget-me-not Charity•Greg Gardner for research, drafting and insightful views•Guildford Borough Council•Guildford College•Guildford Community Job Club•Job Centre Plus•Linda Charlton•London Learning Consortium•Local Crime Prevention Framework•Merstham Community Facility Trust•Merstham Millennium Trust•MIND•Mole Valley District Council•National Careers Service•NESCOT•NHS•Nominet Trust•Oakleaf Enterprise•Raven Housing Trust•Reigate&BansteadBoroughCouncil•Reigate&BansteadCVS•Reigate Rotary Club•SFA•Shorefield Centre•Skill, dedication and inventiveness of staff•Skills Funding Agency•Social Services•Strodes College•Sure Start Children's Centre•Surrey Community Foundation•Surrey County Council•Surrey County Council Local Area Committee•Tandridge District Council•The CornerHouse•The Mental Health Team•The Probation Service•The Richmond Fellowship•The Surrey Minority Ethnic Forum•The Tinder Foundation•TS Ambuscade•Wates•WEA•Wells Centre•Woking Borough Council•World Wildlife Fund•YMCA Guildford•York Road Project•Youth Service•

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