



# St Eds Lifelong Learning Bulletin

May 2010

St Edmundsbury Borough Council

## Skills for Life

"We were really pleased to be able to have the opportunity to attend the Level 1 Numeracy course at West Suffolk College. It has really helped us with everyday calculations and it's also given us a huge boost in confidence. We both would recommend the course to anybody who feels they need to improve their numeracy skills."

**Andy Cobbold and Jason Baldwin (below right)**

This year, St Edmundsbury is signing the 'Skills Pledge' which commits us, as an organisation, to ensuring all our staff have support in reaching Level 2 in Literacy, Numeracy and ICT skills – the 'skills for life' that everyone needs to be successful.

The focus of this Adult Learners' Week will therefore be Skills for Life, and we'll be offering help in:

- **Identifying your needs**
- **Building your skills**
- **Planning your next steps**

We will also be offering some extra activities (to be confirmed) such as launching a Book Club, a Gardening Club and a Debating Society, and another of our popular seasonal vehicle checks. In addition, we will be celebrating the success of those students who have completed Skills for Life courses since October 2009.

CMT fully supports the organisation working towards the Skills Pledge and looks forward to further improving the culture of learning which has brought St Edmundsbury national recognition in the last couple of years.

**Sandra Pell, CMT Learning Champion**



**"I've not always been one for courses but taking part in Basic Skills Numeracy was a great experience and confidence booster. Some of the other corporate courses we went on a few years ago like Disability Awareness and the Lifelong Learning Basic IT were also fun to do and I learned a lot – so much so that I can now use our own PC at home."**

*Steve Moore (above)*

## Feedback

I asked my colleagues David Vanner and Graham Maynard (*below right*) what they thought of the opportunity to take up the offer to study for numeracy and literacy which was made last year. David said, "I've always struggled with numbers so when I got the chance to do numeracy with the college I took it. I was so pleased when I passed and received my certificate which proves that I have achieved Level 2. I'm 62 so it shows that you are never too old to learn."

Graham had a different story and this is what he said: "I've done a lot of courses in my time and believe that whenever people get the chance to go on one they should because it helps them to get on in life. It's difficult to get your head round sometimes but I would encourage anyone to muster all their courage and step up to the plate because learning helps build your confidence. I did the Level 2 in Literacy and found that it was a really fun way to learn and not in any way like going

back to school. Modern teaching methods are so different and it is fun."

At that point David chipped in and said, "Make sure everybody gets that. It's not like school – the whole experience was so much fun and it was really worth doing."





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Craig Young, Unison Learning Rep, says:

The policy of St Edmundsbury Borough Council is to help any employee who wishes to achieve up to level two in the Skills for Life of Literacy (reading and writing) and Numeracy (number skills). We're also encouraging our workers to get ICT skills too. Most of the people who feature in this news sheet are refuse, cleansing or landscape workers but they are by no means the only ones affected by Skills for Life development needs. Many of the people who work in our offices also have problems with numeracy and literacy. A recent study has found that **one in six university graduates** admits to having difficulty with literacy and/or numeracy. As Unison Learning Rep I've helped to encourage men from the Haverhill depot to sign up for Skills for Life classes in Haverhill. Spokesman Colin Farrant says they enjoyed the numeracy course and all achieved a pass at the level they were aiming for. They found the course was not the frightening experience they had anticipated and instead it was great fun. Credit is due to the tutor from West Suffolk College who they describe as 'brilliant', using easy-to-follow teaching methods.

Here are some comments from those who gained qualifications in Numeracy and Literacy:

"Making the first step and deciding to go on one of the courses can often be the most difficult part of the process since many of us did not have a good experience at school. Somehow we have managed to muddle through without qualifications."

"Making my mind up to go on this course was the most difficult thing which I have done but it has helped me face my Gremlins."

"Working is all about earning money to put food on the table and a roof over our heads isn't it. However we are fortunate that we work for an organisation that looks on each one of us as a valued member of staff and they will train us to enable us to deliver a better service for our clients and customers. It doesn't stop there because they can help us develop in areas other than those required just to get the job done. We become happier in ourselves ... My advice is to take advantage of this"

"I am really glad that you came and encouraged me to go on this course because it has been really worthwhile."

And don't forget, this initiative is also a second chance for those who never had the chance to take GCSEs or "O" levels and would like to show their achievement at that level for job applications, promotion or simply their own satisfaction.

Craig Young Lifelong Learning Co-ordinator, Unison Branch.

For further information on what is on offer or to ask about Lifelong Learning at St Edmundsbury contact Craig Young on 07939 830798; [craig.young@stedsbc.gov.uk](mailto:craig.young@stedsbc.gov.uk) or Diane James at West Suffolk House ext 7371; [diane.james@stedsbc.gov.uk](mailto:diane.james@stedsbc.gov.uk)