

# Lifelong Learning



Version of 8 DECEMBER 2006 This report forms part of the Thattham Vision First Action Plan and should be read in conjunction with other documents which together form the complete plan.

These are listed in the full index given on the back page of this report. *[to be inserted in Jan]*

This version of the Action Plan will be further extended and updated in 2007, when results of the Market Town Health Check and other data collection will be analysed. A dedicated topic team will be retained and extended take this plan forward, update it and incorporate any amendments. This will be a continuous activity – and as actions and projects are implemented, progress will be reported under each topic.

Individuals interested in helping out as a volunteer to progress actions and projects for this topic should contact Thattham Vision at [thatthamvision@gmail.com](mailto:thatthamvision@gmail.com)

#### Acknowledgements

Thattham Vision acknowledges all the help and support that has been provided by people in Thattham who have contributed their time and knowledge at no charge, without which this Action Plan could not have been produced. Neither would progress have been made without the substantial level of financial support from Thattham Town Council, which had the foresight to initiate Thattham Vision in 2004, and has shown its commitment to improving the town in many ways in recent years. Thanks also to West Berkshire Council/WBC, which financed a series of documents and consultations, and provided other support including a Secretary and equipment. WBC also supports Community Action West Berkshire (CAWB) which has provided guidance and support to the parish planning process in Thattham and other parishes. Finally, thanks to the Thattham Vision Project Manager (Andrew Cooper) and his assistants Sue and Claire, who were employed part-time for approximately one year to coordinate volunteer groups, organise data collection and oversee all the activities which enabled the production of this plan. However, the work initiated in 2004 is just the beginning – much more has to be done to update and extend the plan, and to ensure actions and projects are actually implemented. I hope that organisations and residents will be able to commit the same level of support for this work in the future as they have done in the past year.

Sue Everett, Chair, Thattham Vision, 8 December 2006

The First Thattham Vision Action Plan has been produced by Thattham Vision<sup>1</sup>, which is a non-profit-making organisation run by people who live or work in or who have an interest in Thattham. Directorship of Thattham Vision is available, subject to application and nomination, to any person resident or with an interest in Thattham.

Thattham Vision aims to:

- Identify needs and opportunities for the benefit of the parish of Thattham.
- Develop and take actions (and encourage others to do the same) that will benefit people and the environment of Thattham and its locality.

#### From February 2007

Copies of this Plan are available to view at the following locations:

- Thattham and Newbury libraries
- Kennet School library
- Trinity School library
- West Berkshire Council offices, Market Street, Newbury
- Thattham Town Council offices, Brownsfield Road, Thattham

The Plan, and accompanying documents, including research and consultation data, can also be viewed on the Thattham Vision website ([www.thatthamshapethefuture.org.uk](http://www.thatthamshapethefuture.org.uk))

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<sup>1</sup> Limited company and charity status is being applied for

Web: [www.thatchamshapethefuture.org.uk](http://www.thatchamshapethefuture.org.uk)

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## PRIORITIES

The two priority projects proposed for this topic by Thatcham Vision are to:

- provide a new library for Thatcham
- develop Thatcham as a Learning Town.

If successful this initiative would result in:

- A new and much enlarged library for Thatcham with an extended remit (base for Thatcham as a Learning Town)
- Information about learning opportunities being available from a single point
- Improved lifelong learning provision
- Increased participation in lifelong learning opportunities (including inter-generational learning)
- An enhanced skill base among the population at a time when skill shortages are an economic challenge.

This initiative would also aim to extend the self-help model used by the University of the Third Age and other groups.

## INTRODUCTION

Lifelong learning is both a European and a UK government priority and so it was considered appropriate that this should be an appropriate area to focus upon. The Thatcham Vision Lifelong Learning Team

included five residents from Thatcham: Paul Dean, Geoff Eagles, Dorothy Goode, Peter Jarvis and Jan Watts. In addition, Moyra Blake and Lynn Frost from the Adult and Community Education service and Mike Brook from the Library and Information Service contributed to the team. The local residents had diverse but very relevant expertise from schoolteachers to Professor of Continuing Education. The West Berkshire Learning Partnership also contributed to the discussion.

## WHAT IS LIFELONG LEARNING?

Lifelong learning has two fundamentally different definitions: the first is that most generally used – all learning from cradle to grave. However, in terms of government policy it is used in the sense of recurrent education: every social provision made which offers individuals the opportunity to continue their learning – for whatever purpose.

Four 'pillars' of learning for the future were identified by the Delors report (1996)<sup>2</sup>:

- learning to know
- learning to do
- learning to live together (and with others)
- learning to be.

A fifth one, learning to care, might be added – care for the planet, the environment, people, and so on.

## WHO DOES WHAT

Lifelong Learning is an area where **many clubs and societies** are active, from the **University of the Third Age** to **classes** in yoga and painting run by individuals or through local centres, such as Kennet Leisure Centre or Newbury College.

**Public agencies** are heavily involved in lifelong learning provision. They include:

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.unesco.org/delors/>

- West Berkshire Council's Library and Information Service
- West Berkshire Council's Adult and Community Learning team
- Newbury College
- Other further and higher education centres in the local area (e.g. Thames Valley University)
- Kennet Leisure Centre<sup>3</sup>

**The West Berkshire Lifelong Learning Partnership** brings together education and training providers with representatives of the private sector to develop lifelong learning through easier access to all learning opportunities for pleasure, improving skills and knowledge or to help work prospects. It has identified priorities under the West Berkshire Community Plan (2003-08). See Appendix 1 to this report.

## KEY ISSUES

**Thatcham, as a rapidly growing town needs an infrastructure that will encourage and provide opportunities for residents to continue both their learning and development. In order to generate more social cohesion in the town, opportunities of work and leisure activities and inter-generational opportunities for individuals to meet and learn together need to be provided.** At present little of this exists and so the community spirit of Thatcham does not extend to all aspects of the town. There are a number of key issues:

- Government cut-backs in lifelong learning act against achieving all or most of the aims of lifelong learning;
- Newbury College is being forced to cutback on its provision and some concern has been expressed about the breadth and quality of its provision;
- Skill shortage and literacy issues are significant problems in this area;
- The provision that occurs is uncoordinated;
- It is difficult to discover precisely what

learning activities are being offered;

- Thatcham's library is too small (about one third of the size that could be expected for a town of this size and it is not open all of the time because of council cut-backs. It is, therefore, unable to develop all the lifelong opportunities that the library service might provide;

In contrast, the government's own research into lifelong learning (The Wider Benefits of Learning<sup>4</sup>) shows that participation in it improves health, and consequently lowers the cost of health-care provision and produces more fulfilled citizens. Other research has demonstrated that Lifelong Learning benefits to the economy.

## GOALS FOR LIFELONG LEARNING

- LL1** *Ensure that access to lifelong learning in Thatcham is easy, affordable and as comprehensive as possible.*
- LL2** *Ensure that information about what's available and how to access it is easy for everyone to obtain*
- LL3** *Enable people to use lifelong learning to achieve their potential and feel a sense of pride and self worth*
- LL4** *Enable people across Thatcham, including adults, to improve literacy and numeracy*
- LL5** *Enable people to enjoy learning and meeting others*
- LL6** *Enable people to improve their physical and mental health and wellbeing through lifelong learning*
- LL7** *Enable people to exploit lifelong learning to help them cope with complexities of modern life*

<sup>3</sup> Jointly funded by West Berkshire Council and Thatcham Town Council

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.learningbenefits.net/>

## ACTIONS AND PROJECTS

### Thatcham: A Learning Town

The core projects proposed for this topic by Thatcham Vision are to:

- provide a new library for Thatcham
- develop Thatcham as a Learning Town.

The development of a new library would be central to the development of Thatcham as a Learning Town.

Thatcham's current library is too small<sup>5</sup> (only about one third the size it ought to be for a population of 25,000). To bring it up to the standards equivalent to other towns it will need to be at least 700m.

The learning town is not a new initiative, there being many learning towns and regions throughout the world. Originally encouraged by the Government under David Blunkett (the then Secretary of State for Education) their aim was cited as 'to promote social cohesion and economic development'.

In some countries the learning town activities are managed by the local government department responsible for adult and community education although they are rarely based in educational institutions. The objectives of learning towns are, amongst others, to:

- develop community wide-initiatives to bring together learning providers from around the whole area;
- promote and support the value of learning;
- ensure strategic linkages between providers and this could be very important as the idea of the extended school is developed in Thatcham;
- improve access to good quality learning opportunities (education and training);
- supplement, where possible, learning opportunities beyond those provided by the adult and community education organisations in West Berks;
- enhance learning opportunities for

those who are not traditionally involved in such activities;

- engage industry and commerce as active partners;
- reinforce the role of local government as supporters of learning activities
- integrate educational, environmental, social, community and economic life of the town;
- enhance e-learning opportunities
- facilitate inter-generational learning
- initiate new projects within the framework of developing the town and the community.

The ideal base for this initiative would be a new and much-enlarged library with a wider remit. This links to the related project proposed for Thatcham Town Centre, for a new library, information and community learning centre.

Public libraries already provide the base for other Learning Towns, e.g. in Cheltenham<sup>6</sup>.

Developing a Learning Town will need to involve the following steps:

- Establishment of a Thatcham Learning Town Forum to progress the initiative
- Engagement of existing public bodies to support the initiative (especially West Berkshire Council)
- Establishing links with the Extended Schools, especially Kennet School
- Construction and resourcing a new library for Thatcham
- Development of a Learning town strategy
- Engagement of other learning providers.

**Central to delivery of the Learning Town initiative for Thatcham will be to build on the Extended Schools Initiative**, which is an initiative to make facilities at schools more widely available to the community outside school hours.

<sup>5</sup> Currently approximately 180m<sup>2</sup>.

<sup>6</sup>[www.cheltenham.gov.uk/libraries/templates/community.asp?FolderID=191](http://www.cheltenham.gov.uk/libraries/templates/community.asp?FolderID=191)

Another linked project is the Community Website (see Social & Community Development report). This aims to provide a one-stop-shop source of information about leisure, learning and other opportunities available to local residents.

**establishing accessible wireless internet throughout the town.** (A project detailed in the Social and Community Development topic report.)

## Other actions and projects

**A priority is to establish a forum of learning providers** – one which covers all age ranges and all aspects of daily living. This forum should include all forms of providers from the Nature Discovery Centre to business and industry.

**This forum should assess that whether Thatcham's most obvious learning needs are being met and identify gaps.**

This forum might also mount a **learning fair** in the summer demonstrating the range of formal and non-formal provision of learning opportunities exist already in Thatcham.

There are plenty of people with experience and talent available in the Thatcham area who could assist with the development of these plans.

It was also felt that those involved in the learning town development might also assist in the Thatcham Festival of Arts

Thereafter, the feasibility of Thatcham as a learning town will then have to be investigated.

Naturally, the final development of the plan is related to the development of the library, although the initial developments need not await a new library provided those responsible for lifelong learning in the library service are able to be involved in this initial planning.

One of the foundations of the learning town would probably be a coordinating body to which the team gave the name 'The Thatcham Community College'.

Coupled with the implementation of Thatcham as a learning town, would be

## TABLE OF ACTIONS AND PROJECTS

WBC: West Berkshire Council

TTC: Thatcham Town Council

NC: Newbury College

TV: Thatcham Vision

TFC: Thatcham Film Club

A: Action

P: Project

S: Short-term (&lt;2 yrs)

M: Medium term (2-5 yrs)

L: Long term (5-10 yrs)

Ref	Action or project	Goals	Lead and Potential partners	Finance or resources	Timescale	Further details
LE1 SC1 C1	Build and resource a new library for Thatcham which would also become the base for Thatcham as a Learning Town and provide much extended services to residents <b>P</b>		<b>WBC</b>		M	Building a new library is a core priority for Thatcham Vision.
LE2	Establish a Thatcham Learning Town Forum as a means to initiate activity to establish Thatcham as a Learning Town. <b>A &amp; P</b>		<b>TV</b> WBC TTC, NC		S	
LE3	Run a lifelong learning fair in the spring of 2007 at which providers and local groups can promote what they do and assess unmet needs. <b>P</b>		<b>TV</b>		S	Initial ideas being gathered
LE4	Improve involvement of local businesses in lifelong learning provision. <b>A</b>		<b>TV</b>		S	Including publicity, sponsorship and increased participation in education and training. This could emerge as a result of creating a forum for planning the learning town
LE5	Identify ways of exploiting the extended schools initiative when it is introduced in Thatcham in 2007. <b>A</b>		<b>TV</b>		S	
LE6	Identify ways of augmenting the Thatcham Festival of Arts to increase emphasis on lifelong learning. <b>A</b>		<b>TTC</b> TV		S	
LE7	Explore ways of having lifelong learning champions in the community <b>A</b>		<b>TV</b> WBC		S	This is a potential outcome from the forum
LE8	Compile & maintain details of all local halls, schools, clubs and other venues which could be used to run classes and groups <b>A</b>		<b>TTC</b> TV		<b>Done</b>	A comprehensive list has been compiled by the Vision team as part of the lifelong learning topic teams work and provided to TTC who will maintain the list.
LE9	Set up a Thatcham Film Club <b>P</b>		<b>TFC</b>	£10,000 <sup>7</sup>	<b>Done</b>	A member of the community instigated a film club after attending a meeting of the Vision Lifelong Learning Team.
LE10	Exploit the proposed community website to promote learning opportunities in Thatcham <b>A</b>		<b>TV</b>		S	

<sup>7</sup> Funded by Awards for All

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LE11	Find ways of helping the redeveloped Nature Discovery Centre play a role in helping people in Thattham to learn about issues related to the environment <b>A</b>		<b>TV WBC</b>		S	This is already being acted upon by the Thattham Vision Environment Team.
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## Appendix 1: Extracts from West Berkshire Partnership Community Plan 2003-2008

Priorities established for Lifelong Learning are:

### **Priority 1:**

**Developing lifelong learning through easier access to learning opportunities for all whether for pleasure, improving skills and knowledge or to help with work prospects.**

- Raising awareness of the learning opportunities available through our West Berkshire Lifelong Learning Partnership web site ([www.eezeeweb.org](http://www.eezeeweb.org)) and creating user links to partner websites.
- Extending the use of the Community Learning and Information Vehicle (CLIVE) for promotional purposes.
- Promoting professional vocational qualifications and the time off for study initiative.

### **Priority 2:**

**Increasing participation and retention in learning, particularly amongst currently under-represented groups.**

- Supporting voluntary sector capacity building programmes.
- Identifying access to learning for isolated communities.
- Developing supported work placements for people with disabilities.

### **Priority 3:**

**Increasing levels of achievement by local learners by improving the range and quality of learning opportunities.**

- Working with gifted and talented people to help them reach their full potential.
- Raising levels of basic skills by implementing a variety of projects.
- Encouraging the disaffected learner to return to learning.

### **Priority 4:**

**Ensuring that lifelong learning is considered in respect of transport, sustainability and public health.**

- Ensuring learning is included in the Parish Planning process.
- Identifying gaps in the provision and enabling partners work together to fill these gaps.
- Mapping existing provision of information and communication technology resources.