

# BRIGHTER FUTURES

WESTON COLLEGE NEWSLETTER FOR SOUTH WEST OFFENDER LEARNING

## Welcome to this edition of Brighter Futures.

**It has been a great start to the year with some fantastic work going on across the region. Teaching standards and observation grades are at an outstanding level, putting us at the forefront of the sector.**

We have some exciting developments underway including the development of 'Releasing New Potential' - our new Community Interest Company which we hope will link together some of the great projects going on inside prison to real employment opportunities through the gate.

Partnerships with employers remain an extremely high priority and talks are underway with national employers to support that process.

I have had the pleasure of visiting most of you over the past few months and hope to continue to regularly get away from my desk to come and see first-hand the great work that you are all doing.

***"...a great start to the year with some fantastic work going on across the region."***

We are, as ever, in a period of change in terms of the Review of Education in Prisons, along with other reviews and studies of Offender Learning as well as the potential funding changes. We have given panel members and key decision makers open access to our provision and they have been impressed with the high standard of education here in the South West. This is obviously crucial to position our organisation for the future and I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for all the hard work that you do on a daily basis to ensure that we remain at the top of our game.



**Fiona Holder**, Executive Director

# OLASS Academic

The fourth **OLASS** Academic Conference took place on 20th August 2015.

This year's theme was '**Excellence and Vision**'. The keynote speaker, Andy Cope, ran workshops on "The Art of Being Brilliant", focused on positive psychology and learning new habits of thinking and behaviour. Other workshops included "Excellence in Teaching" and "Vision, Staff Development and Impact" which were delivered by members of the OLASS Management Team. The conference was well attended by Weston College OLASS staff, The Open University, City and Guilds, ETF, National Careers Service, Prisoner Education Trust, The Reading Agency, UCU, The Dog's Trust, NCFE, AptEd, N-ergy, Prison representatives and NIACE.

Staff were nominated by their managers and colleagues for awards to recognise dedication and innovation.

**Congratulations to all the award winners:**



**Jo Alder**, HMP Dartmoor, won Best Practice Functional Skills (Maths) "as she has been proactive in the development of Functional Skills Maths and has created a range of highly engaging, interactive and most importantly, enjoyable activities to make maths fun!"



**Vicki Keast**, HMP Dartmoor, won Best Practice VC & ICT for the second consecutive year "as she will always go the extra mile, regularly uses initiative to develop solutions and is very supportive of managers in improving the ILT / VC."



**Ali Brown**, HMP Portland, won Best Practice Functional Skills (English) "for achieving high success rates and value added results which impact beyond success in their exams."



**Elva Longfoot**, HMP Guys Marsh, won Best Practice PSD. "The characteristics of Elva are passion, enthusiasm, professionalism, belief, empathy and determination to motivate and support learners to change their lives for the better."

# Conference



**Andrew Cleal**, HMP Guys Marsh, won Best Practice: Construction as “he achieved excellent lesson observations during recent Ofsted inspection and continues to maintain this high standard throughout the year.”



**Nigel Brown**, HMP Eastwood Park, won Best Practice: Creative Craft as he has achieved a grade 1 lesson observation and many of his learners stated that he is “artistically talented”, “non-judgemental”, “inspirational”, “dedicated and inclusive”.



**Emma Blamey**, Barbering Tutor, HMP Channings Wood, won Best Practice: Vocational “for the majority of this year she has increased her learner numbers twofold maintaining the highest quality.”



**Cheryl Martin**, Catering Tutor, HMP Leyhill, won Outstanding Practice Award as her high and exacting standards and attention to detail enable all her learners to succeed and not just achieve qualifications but develop their personal and social skills and confidence to great effect.



Finally, the **Construction Team** at HMP Portland, James Caine, Royston Mitchell, James Mowlam, Dave Sheppard, Dan Skelton and Ray Wilson, won Outstanding Team Award because they are pro-active in deciding to work together to improve planning, delivery, embedding wider learning outcomes, and stretch and challenge to ensure an excellent learning experience and the development of high standards of vocational competence. Their aim was for all courses to have high learner achievement and showcase best practices that could be shared with other areas.

*Fiona Holder, Executive Director External Partnership and OLASS, and George Reah, Vice Chair of Governors and OLS Board Chair Weston College, with The Construction Team at HMP Portland: James Caine, Royston Mitchell, James Mowlam, Dave Sheppard, Dan Skelton and Ray Wilson*

**Congratulations to all of the OLASS Academic conference 2015 award winners!**

# Jerry Nightingale - Gold Teaching Award - The Pearson's Award for Lecturer of the Year!

**Jerry Nightingale, Lecturer at HMP Channings Wood, was nominated by his managers and supported by Weston College Principal, Dr Paul Phillips OBE, for the Pearson Further Education Teaching Awards 2015.**

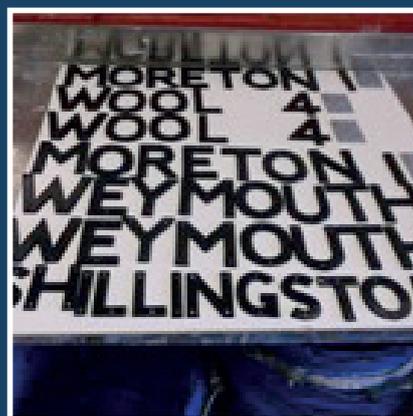
Jerry was shortlisted from over 4,000 entries and was awarded the Silver Teaching Award in the category, The Pearson's Award for FE Lecturer of the Year. He went on to win the prestigious Gold Award. This was a fantastic achievement, making Jerry the first lecturer within Offender Learning to receive the award and such recognition for his work.

Jerry commented: "I don't shout about what I do – I come in and just do it. I am the first lecturer from the Offender Learning Sector to be nominated, to receive Silver and now Gold. Obviously I am immensely proud to have won it, and even more thankful to my students, current and ex, together with my colleagues from college and prison. I would also like to thank Delyse Taylor, for putting together the initial nomination form, and Mark Jellicoe, for tweaking it to reflect what I do here at the prison. I hope, if anything is to change off the back of my success, that it raises the profile of, and the value given to, what we in Offender Learning do."



# HMP Portland Enrichment Project

Dorset Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty are working in partnership with the learners and tutor in the Paints Workshop at HMP Portland to refurbish historic fingerposts that can be seen throughout Dorset. Learners in the workshop develop specialised painting skills while learning English and maths, which is embedded into the project. The posts are retrieved from Dorset villages by Dorset Areas of Natural Beauty and taken to the prison workshop. The learners at HMP Portland have commented on the amount of satisfaction they gain from working on this real life project, achieving an accredited qualification and knowing that they are supporting the local community.



# Paul's Learner Journey and Success Story!

**'Paul', an ex-prisoner, shares his Learner Journey and success story about how he found employment on release from a prison in the South West of England. While serving his sentence, Paul enrolled on a vocational training course with n-ergy\*. n-ergy works in close partnership with Weston College to deliver vocational and employability programmes to learners in custody.**

Paul successfully achieved a QCF/NVQ qualification in Performing Manufacturing Operations which helped him develop new skills and gave him a renewed sense of purpose. It also helped him to set goals.

Determined not to re-offend and instead, rebuild his life, one week prior to his release date Paul met with a member of n-ergy's employment support team, Lee.

Paul said: "My initial meeting with Lee towards the end of my sentence was filled with so much enthusiasm and positivity. Lee was, from the start, planning my route into work on my release. He looked at my CV and started to get a plan and ideas of where to look and prospective employers to approach."

Paul also did his own homework by scouring the local newspapers and job boards and even approached employers at their premises face to face in his search to find work. As a result of this determined approach, three interviews were scheduled into one week.

Paul added: "We arranged an interview at a local distribution centre in Wales where Lee actually drove me there on the day and I subsequently got employment. It was due partly to Lee's enthusiasm and belief in me that I went to the interview so relaxed and especially so soon after my release which for some people can be a vulnerable time."

Paul is now earning a decent wage to support his family, and is grateful for all the support he has received to secure a permanent job shortly after his release with a national retailer close to his home town.

Achieving a qualification has given him the confidence and self-esteem to re-enter the workplace and Paul is confident about his future and the new challenges that lay ahead.

To read more testimonial and success stories please visit n-ergy's website [www.n-ergygroup.com](http://www.n-ergygroup.com)

***"My initial meeting with Lee towards the end of my sentence was filled with so much enthusiasm and positivity..."***



**n-ergy**

\* founded eight years ago to work with offenders and ex-offenders throughout the UK

# Prison Radio Association

## -HMP Channings Wood received a Certificate of Excellence

### HMP Channings Wood received a Certificate of Excellence from the Prison Radio Association for Insider Prison Radio 2015.

The certificate was presented to Louise Mitchell, Weston College's Radio Production tutor, who designed the course and integrated Prison Radio into the delivery. Erin Riley, Head of Prison Radio, visited HMP Channings Wood and commented "I was really impressed by what's going on."

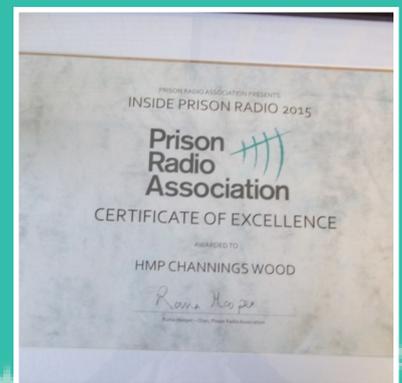
The course focuses on the learners producing a one hour radio show which is linked to the four week NCFE course. This show consists of interviews, adverts, jingles and music. Interviews are conducted by the learners and these are often held with senior prison management, including the Governor, to discuss issues and interests relevant to the learners. The course builds confidence, self-esteem and self-worth as the learners feel they are developing important material that is listened to by a large and varied audience.

Once collated and edited by the tutor, Louise Mitchell, the show is played out across the HMP Channings Wood internal radio system via the National Prison Radio. NPR is a dedicated station for offenders which broadcasts from Brixton Prison in London. Prisons

are then able to play out their own shows at certain times of the day. Some of the work produced by learners on the course has also been broadcast across the whole of the prison estate and the Certificate of Excellence recognises the excellent work that has been done at HMP Channings Wood.

*"I was really impressed by what's going on."*

**Erin Riley**  
Head of Prison Radio



**Prison  
Radio  
Association**

# Butler Trust

The Butler Trust recognises, celebrates, develops and shares good practice by people working in prisons, probation, and community and youth justice, across the UK.

Martin Sheppard and Emma Blamey, both from HMP Channings Wood, were nominated by their managers. Martin currently teaches the City & Guilds Level 2 Forklift Truck course at HMP Channings Wood. This course is highly valued by offenders as they see it as a realistic qualification to gain employment on release in a wide range of working environments. The course is delivered professionally mirroring a realistic working environment and Martin endeavours to deliver in a way that prepares men fully for work on release. A 99% success rate is testament to his outstanding delivery and dedication to learner achievement. We asked Martin what he thought about his nomination. He said: "To receive anything

as recognition of your work is always an honour and in this case totally unexpected." Emma is responsible for the delivery and overall day to day management of the Barbering Course within HMP Channings Wood. Both of these tasks she demonstrably achieves with aplomb. Like most people who are supremely proficient in their day to day activities, she makes it look easy which doesn't mean it is. Emma Said: "I feel very proud to have been nominated for a Butler Trust Award. Knowing that my peers and managers thought I deserved to be nominated, it blew me away. As with many tutors within OLASS, we do what we do to encourage learners to change their lives and attitudes. I see my job as a vocation and what I was meant to do, I wish I'd done it sooner."



## Garden of Contemplation – IRC The Verne

**Many men find themselves detained at The Verne at very short notice. Upon arrival to this unusual environment, and often disorientated, the centre management requested an area for detainees to be able to sit and think in a peaceful area.**

The Brickwork Department of Weston College seized this opportunity with both hands as a project that could encompass a wealth of learning opportunities. Gordon Roy, Brickwork Tutor, said:

***"This was an opportunity not to be missed. It allows an extension to the main course for those who want to put their newly learnt skills into real work practice."***

The project was firstly designed by learners on the brickwork course. They worked to a client brief that stipulated that the area would need to have flowers planted in a contained area around the perimeter, allowing detainees the ability to wander or sit at their leisure.

Learners, centre staff and Weston College staff then set about setting out, digging out and concreting the foundations for the garden area. Over a period of time around 40 detainee learners have worked on the project, having either excelled at their course work or making specific requests to work on the project.

This project is now nearing completion but further opportunities are actively being sort by Gordon to further enhance the skills and experiences of future learners.



# Welcome to Stewart Harrison OLASS Area Operations Manager

*“The staff are passionate,  
highly professional and  
diligent with a relentless  
determination to ensure  
the learners in their  
establishments have an  
outstanding learning  
experience...”*



I believe in transforming lives for the positive and making a difference to society. I thrive on achievement and seeing those around me achieve. I accomplish

this through working for the OLASS team within Weston College. I joined the team in November and I am gradually learning the new way of doing things, understanding the importance of working with the prisons and translating the new prison language! Previous to joining the Weston OLASS team, I have been a Royal Marines Commando and worked in FE for the last 12 years.

Since I have been at Weston College, I have visited the three prisons I will be leading (Leyhill, Portland, Eastwood Park) and The Verne IRC. During my visits, and at the team meetings, I have been highly impressed with the staff and the students. The staff are passionate, highly professional and diligent with a relentless determination to ensure the learners in their establishments have an outstanding learning experience and progress on to better things using the knowledge, skills and personal attributes that they have acquired while being supported by the team.

This is all monitored, recorded and supported by the management team which I feel privileged to be a part of. The team at every level is determined to be the best OLASS provider in the country and I am looking forward to working with them to demonstrate this to the learners and inspectors.

I look forward to working with you all.

**Stewart**

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