

PRESS RELEASE



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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YEOVIL COLLEGE OPENS CUTTING-EDGE NEW CAMPUS

Yeovil College's new cutting-edge Bridport training centre, Matrix, has been formally opened by Oliver Letwin MP.

The new £300,000 centre has been established by Yeovil College with the help and support of BLAST (Bridport Local Action for Skills Training) and through the generous sponsorship of the Thomson Trust and donations from the Bridport Round Table and the James Dyson Foundation. It is intended to improve training provision in the local area.

Initially, Matrix will focus primarily on Composite Engineering training, although there are plans to develop a demand-led provision once the site is established. Composite Engineering is a new area focussed on the creation of strong, lightweight materials for the aviation and ship building industries. Yeovil College is at the cutting edge of these innovative developments. It is one of just five training providers nationwide developing standardised courses in this emerging low carbon technology field and it has already worked with some major international companies.

Students at the new centre will be able to take short courses and complete Engineering Apprenticeships. There are plans to offer additional courses in IT and pre-apprenticeship training in the future. It is hoped that Matrix will eventually cater for the full range of age groups in the Bridport area, from school leavers to adult learners. Provision will be demand-led and based upon the needs of the local community and employers.

Oliver Letwin cut the ribbon to formally open Matrix. He said "*I'm delighted to be opening this new skills training centre. Mercifully, unemployment is still very low in West Dorset, but we need to pull out every stop to keep it that way. More training in real skills is a large part of the answer to this. Matrix will help enormously to give our young people the future they deserve.*"

Yeovil College Principal James Hampton said "*Yeovil College is all about helping individuals succeed and progress and, in so doing, help the economy locally and nationally by creating a workforce ready for the future. Young people in rural areas are sometimes overlooked and can have limited access to training, exacerbated by cuts to public transport and rising fares. Yeovil College and its partners feel that*

centres like Matrix provide the opportunities for people to access training that will improve their skills and prospects and ensure that the local, regional and national employers have the skilled workforce they need to ensure the UK remains a key, innovative player in the high tech worlds of Engineering and Technology.”

BLAST Chairman Arthur Woodgate said “Over four years ago, BLAST was formed to fill a gap in this area. Local training and employment opportunities for young people were very obvious by their absence. It’s been a long haul, but much of what we set out to do has been achieved. This has been made possible by a number of factors, not least of which has been our own determination. But not much would have been possible without the very positive partnerships we have been able to form, particularly with training providers. None have been more positive than our relationship with Yeovil College. There right from the start, always supportive, they have remained constant partners. The Composite Engineering Workshop is the result of some years of joint working between ourselves and Yeovil College and it offers the Bridport area some very exciting opportunities.”

For more information on the courses available from Yeovil College, call 01935 423921 or visit www.yeovil.ac.uk.

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Notes to Editors

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