



Bickton College merger with The Cornwall College Group

Information Booklet #3 - August 2015



THE CORNWALL COLLEGE GROUP



What is the purpose of this document?

Following the official merger between Bicton College and The Cornwall College Group (TCCG), this is the final stakeholder document which confirms and celebrates the merger.

Who is it for?

Students, staff and partners of The Cornwall College Group.

What is the background to the merger?

The recommendation to merge Bicton College with TCCG was formally approved by the Minister for Skills and Equalities, Nick Boles, in October 2014.

Both Bicton and TCCG (through Duchy College and its Rural Business School), share a passion for and expertise in the land-based sector, with both enjoying strong reputations for high quality learning and teaching in this specialist field.

The opportunity existed to do more as a partnership – to support learners, communities and the land-based industry – than would be possible separately; to become a truly world-class organisation, with common values and goals, to focus on 'Making Learning Work'.

What has been happening?

Bicton College officially became part of The Cornwall College Group on March 31st 2015, following the completion of a period of due diligence.

The joint plans that were created during that process are now being implemented, software and systems are being integrated and it is thanks to the hard work of the transition board and former Acting Principal Jane Townsend; who have all played a crucial role in ensuring the success of this merger.

Dr Phil Le Grice, Director of Rural Economy across The Cornwall College Group has now been appointed as the Principal of Bicton College and is charged with implementing our strategic intent and ensuring the South West has a world-class learning environment for agriculture, horticulture and food.

As we look to the future, we will continue to engage with staff, students and industry partners to ensure we deliver on our promise of 'Making Learning Work'.

Recruitment has been good for September and the team are looking forward to welcoming the new cohort of students.



Dr Phil Le Grice

I was born on a farm in Morchard Bishop, mid Devon, where my father was a farm worker and from an early age the countryside inspired and intrigued me. I went on to study A-levels, before progressing towards a degree in agriculture at Seale Hayne; from there I worked on farms in Devon and Kent.

Seeking a new challenge, I was awarded a PhD research opportunity at Seale-Hayne, working with the Jersey States Department of Agriculture, where I studied the impact of frost protection systems on potato crops. I became embedded in a culture of education and research, progressing to a career with the Agricultural Training Board, before becoming the Director of Trials and Research at Duchy College.

Farming seems to me to be unique, at the same time both the most local and the most global of all industries and careers; the skills you gain can lead to opportunities all over the world. If you are interested in agriculture then the world will be interested in you.

Working as the Principal of Bicton College and Director of the Rural Economy at The Cornwall College Group, is an exciting prospect. Bicton College, together with Duchy College Rosewarne, Duchy College Stoke Climsland and our partnerships on many other sites in Devon and Cornwall, is now a critical component of one of the largest land-based colleges in the country. We have over 1,200 acres of land in Devon and Cornwall available for industry-based research and training and many hundreds of students and businesses are already benefiting from what we do.

My vision is to inspire future generations to join our industry and to do this by striving for excellence through our teaching and training and our world-class partnerships in applied research and knowledge exchange. This is the time to share ambitions, build great teams and I welcome the involvement of those who wish to be part of the next chapter of our wonderful colleges.

I am truly excited about the future and I am looking forward to welcoming students to College in September.



News in brief

The new agri-tech block at Duchy College Stoke Climsland has been officially opened in a small ceremony attended by some of the founding fathers of the College. The Daniel Building is the first part of the Future Farm project to be completed; a £10 million scheme including a new higher education hub and state-of-the-art dairy unit.



Around 160 students and staff from Bicton College worked together to prepare Westpoint Exeter for the annual Devon County Show this year. Tutors and students gave their time and expertise to the historic show that celebrates agriculture and Devon's connection to the countryside and rural economy.



Duchy College, part of The Cornwall College Group (TCCG) and Plymouth Argyle AFC have created a new partnership that will help budding coaches and footballers to develop their skills, under the guidance of the League 2 club



South West farming lecturer Rob Dunn has been chosen as a judge for this year's British Farming Awards. Rob, who is head of agriculture and food technology at TCCG will be helping to pick the winners in the Beef Innovator category.



Bicton College has introduced an innovative housing environment for their calves to ensure their wellbeing. The College has purchased calf igloos, purpose built shelters that help farmers give their young animals the best possible start in life.



Bicton College has been recognised as an approved British Horse Society (BHS) 'where to train' centre up to BHS instructor level, the only one in Devon. Since becoming an approved establishment dating back to the 1980s, Bicton College has been graded by the British Horse Society as Highly Commended in all the categories of the approval scheme.



Strengthening the rural economy of Devon and Cornwall

The official launch of the partnership between The Cornwall College Group (TCCG) and Bicton College was celebrated at the Devon County Show (May 23rd). Specially invited guests and a number of industry partners attended the traditional cream tea, where the future plans and vision for the organisation were laid out.

Director of the Rural Economy at The Cornwall College Group, Dr Phil Le Grice, said: "Partnerships, education and research will be the keys to securing the future of the rural economy of the South West. Both Bicton College and TCCG have extensive links with local schools and employers across the region, and a shared passion for providing young people with the right skills: skills that meet the needs of industry."

The Cornwall College Group currently has over 40,000 learners working towards a range of qualifications, including research masters and degrees; 2,000 of those students are specialising in the Rural Economy, to include food, agriculture and horticulture.

Regional Director of the South West NFU Melanie Squires gave her backing for the merger, adding: "It is vital the South West has strong and viable land-based colleges to support our fantastic agricultural industry and its affiliated sectors, which are such an important part of the region's economy. This merger will help to secure the future of both Duchy College and Bicton College, ensuring they prosper into the future and help to raise the bar of academic achievement even further."



Course Advice Days:

Bicton College

Sat 14 Nov 10am – 12pm

Sat 6 Feb 10am – 12pm

Sat 23 Apr 10am – 12pm

HE Open Days

Sat 10 Oct 10am – 1pm

Sat 11 June 10am – 1pm

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