

## Current workers need more green skills

**Developing a green economy means investing in the current workforce, according to former TUC President John Edmonds, speaking in his current role as skills workstream lead of the Aldersgate Group (AG).**

The group brings together business, political and society leaders and organisations (including the TUC) in a bid to help accelerate the transition to a low-carbon economy.

John was contributing to an AG event jointly run with the Ellen MacArthur Foundation (EMF), which works with business and schools to promote the shift to a new resource-efficient economic model.

He argued that it was crucial not to abandon re-skilling opportunities for the existing workforce in favour of investing exclusively in the next generation.



John Edmonds (centre) joins Aldersgate Group Executive Director Andrew Raingold and Dame Ellen MacArthur to promote green skills at work

The current workforce should have an “opportunity of changing direction, of taking on new skills, or preparing for the new economy,” John said.

He also suggested that the shift to a low-carbon economy did not mean the development of green skills and green jobs within the current industrial model.

“To say that there are going to be some green skills and some green jobs is very misleading: if you’re going to transform the economy, you are going to change jobs in a very substantial way,” he argued.

## CWU rings the changes at BT centre

**The CWU South East Central Branch re-launched its completely refurbished learning centre at the Withdean telephone exchange in Brighton during Adult Learners’ Week this year.**

Originally opened several years ago, the centre had fallen on hard times, with a succession of union learning coordinators unable to breathe new life into the project.

But when branch activist Steve Taylor took over the lead ULR role last year, he set about turning it all around.

With the help of £3,000 of branch funds, Steve replaced the outdated computers, originally donated by BT, with the latest laptops.

And instead of the original emphasis on formal qualifications, Steve developed a new strategy focused on informal learning, backed by the branch.

CWU General Secretary Billy Hayes was full of praise for the branch when he attended the re-opening ceremony in May.

“Today we are celebrating the indomitable spirit of a branch that refuses to be put off by a few problems, but rather learns from experience and comes back stronger – I couldn’t think of a better metaphor for lifelong learning!” he said.

Steve is currently running a series of lunchtime cyber-café, where members can drop in and pick the brains of a proficient person on different themes such as genealogy, digital photography, social media, PC navigation and Microsoft Excel.

“Since the opening, we have had successful lunchtime learning with a genealogy-themed cyber café, which helped members to find out more about their ancestry, some going back to the 1700s within a few moments,” Steve says.



Once the re-launched centre is running smoothly, the branch wants to move mobile classes out to other sites, such as Sevenoaks, Tunbridge Wells, Hastings, Eastbourne and Burgess Hill.

All smiles (from left): unionlearn’s Tom Wilson, CWU’s Billy Hayes and Steve Taylor and BT Openreach HR Director Joe McDavid enjoy re-opening the Withdean learning centre