

Project marks decade of training

By Josie Tutty

A YOUTH project designed to tackle antisocial behaviour through mechanics and engineering training has celebrated its 10th* anniversary.

GASP Motor Project – an acronym for Gomshall, Albury, Shere and Peaslake – was formed as a response to antisocial behaviour by young people in the Gomshall area.

There had been a spate of joyriding and torching of cars when the charity was founded.

In the 10 years since its inception, the project has grown from an evening group

run by local church youth workers to its current status as a respected alternative learning provider, working with Surrey schools to deliver sessions often to some of the most hard to reach young people in the county.

Through education and training, GASP students are empowered to achieve accreditations, work placements and apprenticeships in motor engineering.

The project held a celebratory reception evening to mark the anniversary at Clandon Park, in Guildford, last Thursday.

Guests were shown the first screening of a film telling the story of GASP through the words of its students.

Two pupils from Kings College, in Guildford, spoke about the value of the experience for them and how they now hope to pursue a career in the motor trade.

Two GASP founders, Anthony Cassidy and Alan O’Hea, shared in the celebrations and current chairman Sally Varah announced three new patrons – Judge Christopher Critchlow, Shahid Azeem, and Jim McAllister, owner of Dunsfold Park and the Top Gear Track, where GASP students are invited to test drive the go-karts they have built.

The reception was supported by McLaren, with the latest state-of-the-art McLaren Road Car parked

outside the Marble Hall at Clandon. The company hosts the annual GASP Achievement Awards at the McLaren Technology Centre.

GASP students wore overalls and boots sponsored by the Kier Group and former students spoke of the influence the charity has had on their lives.

Guests also heard from Giles Verity, director of Stanhope-Seta, and from former GASP student James Greenhouse who has a work placement with Stanhope-Seta.

“We are offering GASP young people a series of sessions with the company,” said Mr Verity. “If we can get the same level of enthusiasm I



Andy Finch, Jim Harker, David Munro and Bob Brown at GASP Motor Project's 10th anniversary at Clandon Park.

saw at the McLaren GASP Awards ceremony, it will be brilliant.”

Josh Lawton, from Peaslake, spoke about how

he has graduated from being an evening student with GASP to securing a motor mechanic apprenticeship at his local garage.