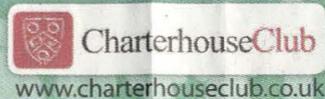


Community News

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Minister learns from the students at motor project

By Fergus McEwan

YOUNG people involved in an alternative learning scheme near Guildford have impressed a government minister with their progress.

Members of the GASP Motor Project, based at the Sand Pit in Albury, showed lord chancellor and justice secretary Chris Grayling how to strip a go-kart engine during an engineering session.

The MP for Epsom was in

the county to see the work of the Surrey Youth Support Service and its partners when he met the GASP team during an exhibition at Brooklands Museum in Weybridge.

GASP was demonstrating its work with students who are at risk of exclusion from mainstream schooling and have alternative learning provision at North West Surrey Short Stay School in Woking.

Mr Grayling talked to students Ben and Connor, and workshop manager Barrie

Birchmore, about the range of skills they had developed since starting sessions at the motor workshop.

They told him they had been awarded AQA accreditation certificates for their work and spoke about their next assignment – testing their go-karts on the track at Dunsfold Aerodrome.

GASP chief executive Andy Finch told the lord chancellor that, in 2013, the initiative worked with students from the short stay school to

restore one of the museum's historic vehicles in a project funded by Toyota.

Mr Finch said: "The secretary of state for justice expressed considerable interest in this successful alternative learning provision.

"He wanted to know more about the way in which the GASP Motor Project improves potentially antisocial behaviour by encouraging disaffected young people to re-engage with education and training, and to gain new

confidence in what they can achieve."

Teacher Sally Rafferty, who accompanied the students to Brooklands Museum, said she told Mr Grayling that attending GASP sessions has had a major impact on the young people in her care.

"Their attendance is erratic but on the days we visit GASP, they are always in school," she said. "GASP improves their concentration, encourages teamwork and, above all, increases self-esteem

when they find they can achieve things they never thought possible."

Ben Byrne, head of Surrey Youth Support Service, said: "Our collaboration with GASP is a shining example of our partnerships with innovative charities and projects across the county.

"These partnerships help the service give young people a chance to develop the skills they need to give them the best chance of employment and a successful future."



Justice secretary Chris Grayling talks to North West Surrey Short Stay School students Ben (left) and Connor and workshop manager Barrie Birchmore about their involvement in alternative learning schemes offered by GASP Motor Project in Albury