

Community News

Mechanics class will expand with £8,000 grant from Hurley

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AN alternative learning programme that helps disaffected young people has received support from the county's Police and Crime Commissioner.

The GASP Motor Project received an £8,000 grant from Kevin Hurley's Community

Safety Fund to pay for a second van so it can deliver more motor mechanics and practical engineering courses across Surrey.

Mr Hurley visited the charity's workshop in Albury to see the new mobile unit in action during a session for students from the North West Surrey Short Stay School in Woking.

He watched as students, who have been excluded or

are at risk of exclusion from mainstream schools, learnt to strip a Fiat Punto engine.

The commissioner talked to the students and to GASP's chief executive, Andy Finch and workshop manager Barrie Birchmore about the range of new skills they had gained since starting the course.

"The Community Safety Fund allows me to support community

individuals and organisations that have ideas to make Surrey a better place to live and work," Mr Hurley said.

"GASP is an excellent example of one such organisation.

"We recognise the fantastic work that this charity does with those who are disadvantaged or disaffected, re-engaging them with learning and providing transferrable skills to help support them

into their adult life. We are delighted that the funding of this new mobile unit will allow GASP to significantly expand its operations across Surrey and work with an increasing number of young people."

GASP has been teaching mechanics to young people aged 14 to 19 since 2005, initially as a crime-diversion evening activity and later as a charity in partnership with Surrey Youth Justice Service.

Its mobile service began in spring 2012 with a grant from the Home Office's Community Action Against Crime Innovation Fund, which allowed it to buy a decommissioned ambulance to carry tools and equipment.

During the past year, GASP has held over 300 sessions for 160 young people, more than 100 of them involving its mobile unit. Participants have gained qualifications and shown positive changes in behaviour.

Mr Finch said: "With the ever-increasing popularity of the mobile service, our new van will provide a much-needed additional resource for years to come.

"Thanks to the generous support of the PCC's Community Safety Fund, we have been able to purchase a modern vehicle that is perfect for the needs of our expanding service.

"Increasingly, we are being asked to work with groups of up to six young people at a time.

"To do that successfully, we must be able to transport a range of small vehicles, engines and equipment that interest and engage them and ensure they are learning throughout our sessions.

"Whether it be go-karts, quad bikes, scooters, motor-bikes or engines, our new mobile unit enables us to do just that."



Police and Crime Commissioner Kevin Hurley (back left) with the new van and GASP chief executive Andy Finch (right) and workshop manager Barrie Birchmore, and teachers and students from the North West Surrey Short Stay School.