



**Hands on learning that helps drive change**

**5 February 2013**

## **HRH The Duke of Kent meets budding young motor mechanics at new GASP Motor Workshop**

HRH The Duke of Kent visited the new GASP Motor Project Workshop at The Sand Pit, Albury today, Tuesday 5<sup>th</sup> February. He watched groups of young people from across Surrey learning basic motor engineering skills, as part of the accredited programmes delivered in the GASP workshop. He also toured the charity's mobile vehicle – an ex-Surrey Ambulance, which has been converted, re-branded and is now taking GASP sessions out to young people throughout the county. Before leaving, The Duke unveiled a plaque to mark his visit.

GASP works with young people who respond well to vocational learning; with some of the hardest to reach young people in society; and with those who have special educational needs, usually aged between 14 and 19 years. Using motor mechanics as a key motivator, the charity develops and delivers customised programmes of activity, which provide these students with opportunities to re-engage with education and learning.

### **Guildford and Woking pupils benefit**

Pupils from King's Manor School in Guildford showed the Royal visitor how they have learnt to strip down and rebuild a Fiat 126. Elsewhere in the purpose-built Workshop, students from the Kingsway Centre at Woking demonstrated many of the engineering techniques they had learnt on a 12-week programme delivered by GASP, in partnership with Brooklands Museum at Weybridge and funded by Toyota GB. Local young people who turn up regularly for the evening sessions – several of them from St Peter's School, Guildford – worked on two go-karts.

Welcoming The Duke of Kent to the new Workshop, Chair of Trustees Sally Varah commented: "We are especially delighted that His Royal Highness can be with us today, to meet some of the young people and to see for himself how much they gain from our life changing alternative learning programme. The fact that His Royal Highness is a Royal



## **Hands on learning that helps drive change**

Fellow of the Academy of Engineering makes his interest in our fledgling motor mechanics charity even more significant.”

### **GASP triples its session delivery**

The Duke of Kent heard from the charity’s Chief Executive, Andy Finch, how GASP plans to deliver over 225 daytime sessions in the next 12 months. “This three-fold increase over 2011-12 is the result of our on-going strategy for GASP to significantly expand the scale, reach and impact of its alternative learning programmes,” explained the CEO. “And now that we have re-opened in Albury, the evening sessions are also attracting more and more young people from the surrounding villages, who are keen to discover more about motor mechanics – some of them before learning to drive.”

### **Guests play key role in GASP development**

His Royal Highness was greeted by HM Lord-Lieutenant of Surrey, Dame Sarah Goad, who last visited GASP in September 2012 to open the new Workshop – constructed by the Northumberland Estate to the charity’s specifications.

Invited guests came from those organisations and individuals who have played a key role in the development of GASP over the past three years. These included representatives from schools and other referring groups; partner organisations – notably Surrey County Council and especially the Surrey Youth Support Service – and Surrey Police. Also present were funders (without whom GASP could not provide such tangible benefits for these would-be motor mechanics): the Henry Smith Charity, Wates Foundation and the Michael Varah Memorial Fund/Schutz Engel Trust,. P&G UK (Procter & Gamble) – represented at this event by Mrs Janette Butler – are currently providing funding for GASP to deliver a 12-week programme from the mobile vehicle to ‘at risk’ young homeless.

### **Why GASP works**

The GASP team of experienced engineers and skilled volunteers, led by Workshop Manager Barrie Birchmore, were presented to The Duke and explained how they teach engineering skills and hands-on courses in a safe and supervised professional environment. One young



## **Hands on learning that helps drive change**

person who completed 10 sessions at GASP as part of a court order has commented: “This project gives us new practical skills – GASP is different from school because it’s all hands-on. I have gained confidence and self-respect – it’s not like they are telling us what to do, they are helping us.”

An officer working with Surrey Youth Support Service endorsed the value to young people in this way: “The atmosphere at GASP is relaxed and non-threatening and allows a trial and error approach, which suits the learning styles of many young people. Within a number of weeks, their insecurities are visibly reducing and individuals begin to demonstrate increased confidence, motivation and self-assurance.”

## **ENDS**

### **Notes to Editor**

GASP was launched in 2005 as an evening activity for young people living in and around Gomshall, Albury, Shere and Peaslake (GASP). In 2009 it became a charity, introducing daytime sessions for young people across Surrey who are disaffected and under achieving, and those with special educational needs. Through its work, it also supports the advancement of crime-resistant communities, diverting young people at risk of anti-social behaviour and providing alternatives to problematic alcohol and drug misuse.

The GASP purpose and vision is to:

- Help young people change behaviours and support them in making a successful transition to adult life.
- Support them to progress through education, employment and training.
- Prepare them in a practical way for the world of work.
- Enable them to experience the value of team work, focusing on personal, social and emotional development.

GASP Motor Project aims to more than triple the number of young people it works with; these sessions will benefit circa 150 young people, predominantly those at risk of becoming NEET or involved with the Surrey Youth Support Service.

GASP is now registered as a delivery centre for AQA Unit Awards, and in future all its programmes will offer young people an opportunity to gain an accreditation (AQA Unit Awards).

### **For further information please contact:**

Andy Finch [andy.finch@gaspmotorproject.org](mailto:andy.finch@gaspmotorproject.org)  
T: 07786 939798

Louise Blakeborough [lblakeborough@chapterfive.co.uk](mailto:lblakeborough@chapterfive.co.uk)  
T: 01306 731800