

**Hands on learning that helps drive change**

## **Chairman's Report for the year ending 31<sup>st</sup> March 2013**

*I concluded my report for the year end 2012 with the reflection that: "These are exciting times for GASP Motor Project as we look to the next 12 months and the promise of a new Workshop location, new Mobile provision, an expansion of session delivery, and grants from more funding streams. Our path is set firm for 2012-2013 and all the signs are that what started as a small local charity, delivering an evening youth provision, will morph into a countywide charity delivering effective accredited training to young people who respond best to vocational learning."*

All that promise has been realised, due in large part to the tireless management and fundraising activity of our CEO, Andy Finch, combined with the expertise and professional skills of the operational delivery team led by Workshop Manager, Barrie Birchmore, and the sound judgement of our Directors. The Board of GASP Motor Project is delighted to report that the past 12 months has, indeed, been an exciting expansionist period, with considerable positive change and progress.

Rewardingly, our strategic objectives for the year have been achieved and, in some cases, exceeded. As a result, we have attracted significant funding (despite the change in the landscape of youth service provision within Surrey) as grant makers have witnessed the positive impact on those young people who benefit from the GASP model, with accredited sessions now delivered across the county. We end the year in a much stronger financial position, with sessions now self-funding and unrestricted donations covering our core costs. Moreover, our brand profile has been raised by two significant events (of which more later): the opening of the new Workshop and a visit by HRH The Duke of Kent.

### **Meeting our objectives**

The aims and objectives of GASP remain unaltered. Our charity provides hands-on courses in basic motor mechanics for young people (14-19 year olds), living in Surrey and the surrounding areas. Much of our work for daytime sessions focuses on disaffected or underachieving young people who are at risk of becoming NEET (Not in Education, Employment or Training). We also deliver for those in mainstream education who respond best to vocational learning; young people with special educational needs (SEN), or young homeless people (a new target group for 2012-13). Effectively, we target those who are often the hardest to engage.

Delivered either in our new purpose built motor mechanics Workshop (opened in September 2012), or using our GASP mobile unit, we run daytime programmes that are tailored to develop practical and interpersonal skills for young people. In the year under report, we also continued to run two evening sessions per week as a diversionary

activity for young people in the villages surrounding Albury – Gomshall, Peaslake, Shere, Ripley, Cranleigh etc. In these rural communities, meaningful evening activities that engage and train young people with new skills are very welcome.

### **Board Directors and Advisers**

It has been an energising year for the Directors of GASP as we have seen the decisions – sometimes difficult – that were taken in the previous year bear fruit. We are very fortunate that our Board members bring wide-ranging skills to the table and generously and unstintingly volunteer their knowledge and time to expand and develop the charity in a way that is achievable and sustainable moving forward.

Anthony Cassidy played a pivotal role in the development of GASP in its earliest days, overseeing the move from the Lychgate Youth Trust to achieving charitable status in 2009. Anthony chaired the Management Committee and was responsible for the day-to-day running of the charity for several years, until the appointment of our CEO. He announced his retirement from the Board in September 2012 and formally retired at the AGM on 8 October 2012, to spend more time with his family. No-one has done more to build the charity and its profile over those years, and the Board recognised his contribution with a special presentation during the Workshop opening in September 2012. We are delighted that Anthony is continuing to support GASP Motor Project as our Founder Patron.

We were sad when Lady O'Connor (Louise) had to resign from the Board this year because of her governance commitments at a Surrey primary school. Her contribution to GASP and her expertise in education, accreditation and working with special needs groups was of critical importance to us at the point we were looking to develop GASP into these areas and we are immensely grateful to her.

Two new Board Advisers were appointed in 2012-2013 and we are fortunate indeed to have secured their support and expertise.

Ellie Paterson (appointed Board Adviser July 2012) is well-known to those in the youth sector in Surrey, in her role as Community Reparation Officer for the county's Youth Support Service (YSS), for which she has worked for 30 years. Ellie has taken on the role as Board Adviser for GASP with special responsibility for risk assessments and health and safety, but advising too on all matters that pertain to marginalised and 'at risk' young people. She is already working closely with GASP's CEO and Workshop Manager to further enhance our operational delivery.

Roger Hawksworth (appointed Board Adviser January 2013) has held senior executive/board positions in the oil, water, and aerospace and defence industries. Notably, he was Secretary General of the European Association of Aerospace Industries in Brussels and before that BAE Systems Chief of Staff, and Managing Director of BAE Systems Guided Weapons. A former Chairman of Trustees of the Lightbox Gallery in Woking, Roger is interested in education, training, and skills development and is very supportive of GASP's objectives. He contributes strategically to the development of the charity and to building links with organisations that can offer work experience and training/apprenticeships. There is every hope that his appointment as an Adviser will develop, and that Roger may join the Board during 2013.

It is a real privilege to work with such a dynamic and positive group of Directors and Advisers, who share a common purpose. I thank each and every one of them for their important and valuable contribution to GASP and particularly for the support and professional advice they give to me as Chair.

### **Embedding the business plan**

The business plan agreed in the previous 12 months was implemented and further developed in the year to March 2013, with a series of challenging strategy days that engaged our Directors and Advisers. All decisions agreed by the Board were taken against the backdrop of the charity's purpose and vision: to enable young people, often including those who are disaffected and marginalised, to maximise their potential.

GASP does this by:

- helping young people change behaviours to support them in making a successful transition to adult life
- preparing them in a practical way for the world of work
- enabling them to experience the value of teamwork, focusing on personal, social and emotional development.

The Board recognises that GASP is now operating in a higher league and must be seen to be delivering a professional product with quality running through at every level. The strategic landscape for the charity operating at March 2013 showed that GASP has significantly repositioned itself and grown over the last 12 months, delivering 180 daytime and 70 evening sessions in the year, set against 70-80 sessions in 2011-2012. In total, 115 young people were supported during this year.

To maximise the benefit of our work we look to work in partnership with other organisations and community groups. Over the past year, we have partnered with Surrey Youth Support Services, Surrey Police, community Youth Support workers, schools (mainstream and special), and other youth related charities, to promote our programmes and to identify and recruit new client groups. As a member of the Youth Consortium Surrey & Borders we are also contracted to deliver 'out of hours' and school holiday programmes (workshop and mobile) as a part of Surrey County Council's Local Prevention Framework in Guildford and Elmbridge boroughs.

The Directors determined in Autumn 2012 that, for the near term, there should be a period of conservative growth and consolidation for GASP. Longer term, we will hope to develop significant alliances with colleges and the motor trade, and will further develop the quality of our offer, with a tiered set of accredited learning programmes. Growth, it is recognised, will come through developing more in-depth, higher quality programmes, whilst optimising the existing assets of our charity.

Significantly, in October 2012 GASP became an accredited AQA Unit Award delivery centre and every course we now deliver (6,10 or 12 week programmes) offers an opportunity for young people to gain an accreditation. We have set ourselves a target for the year from April 2013 that 75% of our clients completing the courses will achieve some form of accreditation.

This takes into account the fact that for many of those clients – particularly those with significant learning difficulties – working towards an accreditation may not always be appropriate. The main objective for GASP remains to ensure that 100% of those students who attend our sessions learn to feel valued, gain respect for others, and start to realise the benefits and pleasure of having goals and aspirations – often having experienced feelings of being useless, spurned by society and passed from pillar to post. What we continue to strive to do is to turn negative attitudes into positive young people – and that is an accreditation for life.

As an adjunct to this, in our first five months as an AQA delivery centre, 39 young people successfully completed courses, and received Unit Award accreditation and recognition of their achievements. All of our AQA Unit Award work is professionally assessed. Every young person who completes an AQA accreditation will receive a Folder of Achievement after completing a programme at GASP. This is part of our continuing focus on professionalism in relation to our clients and service users.

GASP always looks to involve our clients in the development of sessions. Many have limited attention span, and it is absolutely crucial to keep them interested and engaged. Whilst each session has a basic structure to it, there is always the flexibility to change aspects of the training to incorporate the thoughts and needs of the young people, and thereby retain their interest. As well as teaching basic motor mechanics we give young people an opportunity to build a vehicle – either off road or a go-kart. We always encourage them to input ideas and suggestions about customising vehicles, and give them a chance to put those ideas into practice.

We recognise the need to evaluate the outcomes from our work and its impact on the young people participating in our accredited programmes. We must also monitor how effectively they re-engage with education and learning and develop a broader range of ‘soft’ skills including team working, communication, timekeeping, politeness, etc. In the course of this year, GASP acquired a new computer database ‘Social Impact Tracker’ (SIT), to help us capture all this information, and to better measure the success of our work. This will enable us to track all our programmes and activities, our clients, session details, their attendance, and progress towards accreditation. The SIT software will also enable us to monitor and measure improvements in ‘soft skills’.

### **Workshop and mobile delivery**

In late June 2012 work was finally completed on the custom built workshop at The Sand Pit in Albury, constructed to GASP’s own specifications by our new landlords, Northumberland Estates. Accordingly, in early July 2012 we moved from our temporary accommodation at the Queen Elizabeth Foundation in Leatherhead. We are indebted to the QEF for supporting our charity with this interim workplace, and for being so accommodating of our needs.

Thanks must go to Anthony Cassidy for his hands-on negotiations with Guildford BC planners, Michael Baxter and the Northumberland Estates and contractors; and to our Company Secretary, Bob Brown, for all his endeavours and expertise in agreeing the leases for the new workshop – and for all the other ways in which he gives such wise counsel to GASP, on so many matters. We give particular thanks to Hart Brown

solicitors, of Guildford who handled all the contractual complexities pro bono and negotiated on our behalf.

We now deliver sessions to young people in a fully equipped motor mechanics workshop of Cathedral-like proportions, with car lift, compressors, welding equipment etc. The space also provides ample storage for the mobile unit.

In March 2012 we were successful in obtaining a grant from the Home Office: Community Action Against Crime Innovation Fund, which enabled us to purchase a suitable mobile vehicle (an ex-Surrey Ambulance) and the equipment to go in it (including two professional go-karts). This grant also subsidised the delivery of 50 'mobile' sessions over a 13 months period, which were primarily targeted at young people at risk of becoming NEET; they were delivered from youth centres across Surrey. The mobile vehicle was converted and started delivering sessions across the county in May 2012. It has the capacity to transport go-karts and materials to the various schools and delivery centres where our GASP team delivers sessions to young people.

We were delighted that HM Lord-Lieutenant of Surrey, Dame Sarah Goad, DCVO, JP, agreed to officially open the new workshop in September 2012, watched by our service users, stakeholders, decision makers and funders. And in February 2013, it was a very real honour to welcome HRH The Duke of Kent on a visit to a morning session. Again, stakeholders, funders, decision makers and service users were present, with young people from Kings College in Guildford, the Kingsway Centre at Woking, and several of those who attend GASP evening sessions, all demonstrating to the Duke what they learn at GASP and the 'soft skills' that make this such a valuable alternative learning experience for them. We were assured that our Royal visitor – who unveiled a plaque at the Workshop – had been greatly impressed by all that he saw and by the conversations he had with the young students.

### **Session highlights**

We work closely with teachers, youth workers, and the police to ensure that the sessions delivered by GASP are appropriate for each client group. Our CEO and the Workshop Manager, sessional staff and volunteers have developed structured sessions, which are designed to engage the young people, and to enable them to work towards an accreditation. Client organisations are involved in all of the session delivery (supervising behaviour etc.) and therefore help us to ensure that sessions are delivered to a high standard, as well as providing regular feedback on session delivery and client progress.

Here are some examples:

Students from the Kingsway Centre, a 'short stay school' in Woking (formerly a Pupil Referral Unit) benefited from the 12-week programme delivered by the GASP workshop team in partnership with Brooklands Museum and funded by Toyota GB. All four participating students who attended the sessions at Brooklands each week received AQA Unit Award accreditation. Following the programme, one young person completed work experience in a local garage and has now enrolled for a motor mechanics college course at Guildford College. A member of the Kingsway staff said: *"The GASP programme had more impact on the young people taking part than any other external*

*programme they were involved in. There were noticeable improvements in their attitude and behaviour, and in their desire to learn.*” As a direct result of delivering sessions to the Kingsway Centre, one of the Teaching Assistants who accompanied young people to our courses has now become a GASP volunteer.

GASP successfully tendered to deliver school holiday courses in two boroughs, as a part of Surrey County Council’s Local Prevention Framework (programme designed to stop young people becoming NEET). Following the successful delivery of that programme, which directly benefited 36 young people, we have now successfully tendered to deliver an expanded programme over the next two years. This will include ‘after school’ programmes, evening sessions and school holiday courses, and 76 young people will benefit.

With funding support from P&G (Procter & Gamble), the GASP mobile unit delivered a 12-week programme from Walton Youth Centre, which was aimed at young people who were either homeless or at risk of becoming so. This followed substantial core funding from the Schutz Engel Trust and the MVMF to encourage GASP to support young people in this situation, who are notoriously difficult to engage. Our charity worked in partnership with Surrey Youth Support Services. One participant was subsequently offered work experience at a local Audi dealership.

Funding from Comic Relief and the Community Foundation for Surrey is enabling GASP to deliver 6x6 week courses for Surrey Care Trust. The accredited courses are aimed at young people attending SCT’s Staines and Woking learning centres, and effectively provide an alternative education and training programme to 14 to 16 year-olds who are no longer attending mainstream school.

GASP ran a 6-week course from a youth centre in Surrey Heath for four young people who were not in school. Local youth workers identified this group as having an interest in cars and bikes but rarely engaging with any structured programmes, spending most of their time out on the streets. Three of the four young people recorded 100% attendance (the other 66% attendance) at our GASP sessions, making their own way to the youth centre each week (so no need for a youth worker to intervene). Two of the four have now moved on to a structured Surrey County Council Alternative Learning Programme.

These are undoubtedly financially challenging times but in view of the quality and professionalism of our programmes, we are now starting to see repeat business from existing client organisations. Kingsway Centre are looking to GASP to provide weekly sessions for their students during term times. Similarly, Surrey Care Trust are seeking funding for us to deliver weekly sessions at their training centres. In the Farnham area, four schools have commissioned ‘follow on’ six-week courses for their students. In Guildford, Kings College, which draws its students from a deprived local community, is now looking to introduce regular GASP sessions into its alternative learning curriculum, because it recognises the impact of the programme on those who take part.

On evening sessions, we are currently training one of the young people (now 19) who has been a regular attendee for some years to become a session volunteer. He has

certain special needs, which mean that he will find it hard to gain full-time employment, and so this work experience with GASP will look well on his CV.

### **Generous funding support**

I said earlier in this report that over the past year grant makers have been impressed by the positive impact on young people – from a whole range of backgrounds right across the county – who now benefit from the GASP model. We are indebted to all those funders who have given so generously and, in so doing, shown their confidence in our ability to make a real difference to the behaviours and life skills of the young people with whom we work.

The grant towards our core costs from Wates Foundation for 2012-2013 enabled us to make significant strides in our development and the signs are positive that Wates will look favourably on an application for funding into the next financial year. The Schutz Engel Trust, in collaboration with the Michael Varah Memorial Fund, gave £24,000 at the start of this financial year, towards salary but with the caveat that GASP pilot a programme with young homeless. Again, the funding will be repeated for 2013-2014 if the evaluation of outcomes is satisfactory.

We were pleased to receive further funding from The Henry Smith Charity, again towards core costs, and are especially grateful to this respected funder for ongoing support of GASP at critical points in the charity's development. The Betty Riseley Trust awarded a substantial grant towards core costs in October 2012 and we were delighted to welcome one of their Trustees to the Workshop opening.

Funding from Comic Relief and the Community Foundation for Surrey enabled us to deliver a series of accredited courses, and the CEO has been immensely successful over the past year in helping potential service users to identify funding streams to pay for GASP sessions and to make successful applications.

### **Telling the GASP story**

The Workshop opening and Royal visit, together with receptions at the new Workshop for local supporters, have all enabled us to take the GASP story to an increasing number of people. We also encourage funders, county decision makers and stakeholders to visit the Workshop, to meet with the young people taking part in the session, and to talk to our hugely able workshop team, led by the practical and pragmatic manager, Barrie Birchmore.

We have worked hard this year, updating the website, producing a Case for Support brochure, introducing a quarterly News Bulletin, and securing valuable news coverage for GASP across the local media. The Communications Plan for the next financial year promises to spread the GASP message ever wider, with factsheets for potential service users, for students and their parents, and with the introduction of internal communications for our staff, volunteers and Directors.

### **Consolidation and conservative growth**

We have significantly repositioned the charity over the past 12 months, evolving and expanding our offer. Bookings are positive and all the signs are that the Workshop and

Mobile Unit will be heavily utilised through 2013 and into 2014. There is a gratifying demand for our product, both from the service users and their students.

The Directors recognise that we must now be seen to maintain and enhance our high quality, professional learning offer within the sector in which we operate. Over the next year, we aim for a period of conservative growth and consolidation, expanding our portfolio of programmes to cover all potential groups – basic, intermediate and expert – with accreditation wherever appropriate for the student. We will expand our staff team and the volunteer base, to keep pace with demand. Already, we are looking to explore links with the motor trade and with colleges of further education, so that those young people who show a real aptitude for the basics of motor engineering can move on to explore further training and work experience.

A huge degree of dedication, commitment and enthusiasm has gone into getting GASP to this point – from our CEO, the management and operational teams, the workshop volunteers and our Directors. We all gain so much from seeing what is being achieved for the young people who come to GASP – young people who discover things about themselves and the skills they can achieve, that take them by surprise and really do give them new confidence and hope.

That's what gets us out of bed in the mornings.

Sally Varah DL

Chair of Trustees

30<sup>th</sup> April, 2013