

Community engagement case studies

Community engagement is vital to make sure that Guildford borough is the best it can be.

Below are some case studies showing how the community has been informed, consulted or involved by some of the organisations who influence and provide services in Guildford. We hope that these examples will provide some inspiration for future community engagement activities, and encourage more people to get involved.

Project: Pirbright Conservation Area Review

Lead organisation: Guildford Borough Council (Planning Services)

Contact: Mrs J Evans, Conservation Team, email: conservation@guildford.gov.uk

Who's involved: Local residents and the Council.

Activity: You know your area best. In 2009 a group of residents in Pirbright came together to highlight what they valued within their local environment. This group was set up and supported by the Council's Conservation Officers, who facilitated a group walkabout to identify what added to the areas character and sense of place, what the important buildings were and what the less important features were. From this work a Conservation Area Appraisal was drafted, discussed and consulted upon. When adopted, it will form an important and valuable material consideration when assessing planning proposals and making planning decisions in the area.

Part of the public consultation included a local exhibition and early evening drop-in surgery from 4pm to 8pm to allow discussion of the review and appraisal on a one-to-one basis. The exhibitions were advertised by a link on the Council's web site and articles in the monthly Parish Newsletter, delivered to all households in the Parish. A management plan for the area was drafted which will introduce a more pro-active approach to conservation and the management of change. It describes ways in which the local community can become involved in the protection and enhancement of an area such as the setting up of a street audit in the village to survey the public realm. Following on from its success further Conservation Area Appraisals are to follow. For further information visit www.guildford.gov.uk/pirbrightconservation

Project: Westborough Works

Lead organisation: Guildford Borough Council (Neighbourhood and Housing Management Services and Environmental Projects)

Who's involved: Local residents, the Council and partners



Activity: Community pride, confidence and unity were the key elements of delivering the Westborough Works project to encourage residents of Westborough Ward to get involved in decisions and identify priorities for change in their area. Local residents were asked what they wished to see, and set priorities for environmental improvement works (working to a budget of £20,000) within the Westborough area at a series of events in January 2011. Choosing from a range of suggested environmental improvement types, or providing other ideas, local residents showed where they wanted to see improvements by placing coloured dots representing things such as trees, benches, bins and bird boxes on three local

[maps](#). The results were combined and are available to view on an interactive map on the Council's website. The Environmental Projects team analysed the findings and bird boxes have been erected on the site as part of Phase 1 of the project. An action plan has been drafted with information and ideas about how residents, volunteers and local groups can get and stay involved. Publicity has been through the Council website, community notice boards, shop windows, local churches, the Children's centre, Guildford Grove School, St Joseph's and Kings College, Park Barn Centre and Community Centre, in the Community Safety Warden's newsletter and 'Grassroots News' published by the Park Barn and Westborough Community Association. For further information visit www.guildford.gov.uk/westboroughworks

Project: Developing the museum

Lead organisation: Guildford Borough Council (Heritage Services)

Who's involved: Surrey Association for Visual Impairment (SAVI), Headway and the Guildford Borough Council Heritage Service

Activity: The Guildford Heritage team was keen to involve everyone in discussions over the development of the Guildford Museum. In November 2009 to February 2010 the Guildford Heritage team toured with an exhibition of plans to develop the museum site. As part of the engagement process direct consultation sessions were held with [SAVI](#) (those with visual impairment) and [Headway](#) (adults who have suffered head injuries), resulting in a number of recommendations and ultimately improvements to the way in-house exhibitions are run, consultations are undertaken and increased staff awareness of customer needs. This activity also increased the mix of people visiting the museum to include visually impaired people and people with head injuries. For further information visit www.guildford.gov.uk

Project: Thames Valley Housing Resident involvement 2010/2011

Lead organisation: Thames Valley Housing

Who's involved: Thames Valley Housing residents and Thames Valley Housing

Activity: Thames Valley Housing has established a [resident involvement service](#) and published a document called [Taking Part](#) which outlines the different ways residents can get involved and the level of commitment anticipated for each type of involvement. This includes having three residents on the board of directors, introducing a resident's stamp of approval for all documents, providing training to support involvement methods and providing start-up grants, travel expenses, childcare and incentives for residential involvement activities. For further information visit www.tvha.co.uk

Project: Thames Valley Housing – Resident design group

Lead organisation: Thames Valley Housing

Who's involved: Thames Valley housing residents and Thames Valley Housing.

Activity: One of the many ways Thames Valley Housing involves its residents in the work it does is through the resident design group. The group meets every three months to discuss issues relating to the design and construction of Thames Valley Housing new homes. It provides an opportunity for Thames Valley Housing to listen to residents' ideas about design, and for residents to learn more about the design and development process. Guest speakers such as architects are often invited along, and there are also visits to sites under construction. For further information visit www.tvha.co.uk

Project: Wanborough Barns Management Committee

Lead organisation: Guildford Borough Council (Heritage Services)

Who's involved: Local volunteers and Guildford Borough Council Heritage Services

Activity: Wanborough Barns Management Committee is a volunteer run organisation that runs and staffs the Council owned barns. They have direct hands on involvement and responsibility for the management of the barns, which have a number of public openings per year and a small number of private hires. For further information visit

www.guildford.gov.uk/wanboroughbarn



Project: Zigzag stories, a project for people with mental health problems.

Lead organisation: Guildford Borough Council (Heritage Services)

Who's involved: A group of people with mental health difficulties, Guildford Borough Council Heritage Services, Surrey and Borders Partnership NHS Foundation Trust, Surrey County Council Mental Health Service and a professional artist.

Activity: Zigzag stories was a project which focused on engaging with a seldom heard group, people with mental health problems. Several creative workshops were run which involved members of the Insight Art group, Street Level Art and the Coffee Lounge Group using Guildford Borough Council's art and museum collections. The project aims to inspire and stimulate practical art work while bringing members of the group into the Guildford Museum and Gallery to become familiar with the environment and staff. A display of project work created – zigzag books - were then displayed at Guildford Museum. Other projects have included the Oral History project which has recorded people's memories of Guildford. For further information visit www.guildford.gov.uk

Project: Cleaner safer greener

Lead organisations: Guildford and Waverley's Local Strategic Partnership

Who's involved: Local communities, employees of the Council and the Guildford and Waverley's Local Strategic Partnership.

Activity: Front-line Council staff encouraged local people to keep Guildford clean, safe and green through a publicity campaign. Posters of the staff, Dolly, Brian and Bob, doing their jobs with key facts below were posted around the borough having a big visual impact with a clear and succinct message. BBC News Surrey interviewed some front-line Council staff as they carried out their work and the community could listen on the radio to the staff dealing with the daily impact of litter, graffiti or chewing gum on our local environment. For further information visit www.guildford.gov.uk



Project: Surrey Science Circus

Lead organisation: University of Surrey

Who's involved: Local residents, families, students and the University of Surrey.

Activity: Every year the University of Surrey hosts the Surrey Science Circus and welcomes families, students and academics to the University campus. Audiences can see impressive science demonstrations, exciting shows and hear lectures on a variety of subjects. The aim is to make science accessible to the public. The University also supported the European [Festival of Science](#) in September 2009, and runs school liaison and participation programmes which give students from many different backgrounds access to higher education and facilities. In addition, the University has a Technology Bus which makes frequent visits to local schools. A range of revision conferences and sixth form lectures are also held throughout the year. For further information visit www.surrey.ac.uk/sciencecircus

Project: Play Builder project

Lead organisation: Guildford Borough Council (Leisure Services and Parks and Countryside Services) in partnership with Surrey County Council Early Years and Childcare Service, Guildford Borough Council (Community Safety team) and Surrey Wildlife Trust.

Who's involved: Local residents, community members, children, and community partners and agencies.

Activity: A significant consultation and fun day event was held in June 2010 for members of the Westborough community to promote and consult on designs for a Play Builder project in Westborough Woods. The consultation event was held on the site offering the community and children the opportunity to walk through the site with inspiring images of play equipment to prompt their imagination and offer views. An equipment choice leaflet was produced with voting options, and open meetings held to consult on designs. Play activities were also held on the site to promote community use. Community volunteers were engaged in a site clear-up session, and a skip was provided by the Council. Through funding from the Department of Children, Schools and Families the Play Builder project has now been built with the play equipment installed. Further community clean up days have been held at the site engaging local residents and young people who have been supported by Surrey Wildlife Trust, The Matrix Trust and Guildford Borough Council. For further information contact the Play and Development Officer playdevelopment@guildford.gov.uk



Project: FISH Play scheme

Lead organisation: Guildford Borough Council (Leisure Services)

Who's involved: Local residents, children and the Council's Leisure Services.

Activity: FISH (fun in the school holidays) is a play scheme for 10 to 16 year olds that puts an emphasis on having fun during the school holidays; it gives young people the opportunity to relax, socialise, try new activities and play freely. Feedback on the services is requested through twice yearly questionnaires to all parents and separate questionnaires are aimed at the children attending the scheme. Previous consultation has included using a video-cube diary room style event for children on the scheme. The scheme is promoted through school assemblies, community fairs and networks, website brochures, videos, local media and parent mail (an emailed newsletter is sent to all parents on behalf of their child's school). For further information visit www.guildford.gov.uk

Project: Community Safety Wardens –Together we can make a difference

Lead organisation: Guildford Borough Council (Neighbourhood and Housing Management Services)

Who's involved: Local residents and Guildford Borough Council.

Activity: Community Safety Wardens provide an important link between the community and statutory/voluntary agencies and can raise awareness of what's going on locally. They are approachable and visible, doing walkabouts in the community and visiting local schools, businesses and community venues, and they can help address some individual or group concerns. They act as the eyes and ears of the community, reporting issues to the relevant agencies such as Guildford Borough Council, the Police, Surrey County Council and parish councils. The Community Safety Wardens publish regular on-line [newsletters](#) to update residents on recent news and events and let them know what actions have been taken in response to concerns raised. For further information visit www.guildford.gov.uk

Project: Family Festival

Lead organisation: The Electric Theatre

Who's involved: Local community and the Electric Theatre.



Activity: The Family Festival is run during February half term to attract very young members of the community (and their families) to the Electric Theatre, many of whom may never have set foot in a theatre before. In order to learn from this group, informal communication is used to evaluate the Festival during the week with an incentive of a prize draw for completing evaluation forms and a friendly post-festival mail out. The feedback rate is high and the responses scrutinised, with new initiatives or changes being introduced as a result. The feedback is honest, meaningful and very valuable to the success of the Family Festival. Those families returning the following year often comment on the noticeable positive changes. To publicise events the Theatre website is used, social networking sites such as Facebook, and schools and nurseries, playgroups and National Childbirth Trust groups are targeted. Other avenues such as mums.net are also employed. Word of mouth is becoming one of the most significant and effective methods of communication. For further information visit www.guildford.gov.uk/electrictheatre

Project: Volunteering with public services

Lead organisation: Voluntary Action South West Surrey

Who's involved: Voluntary Action South West Surrey, public services and volunteers.

Activity: The Guildford Volunteer Centre finds volunteers for 221 organisations, many of which support the delivery of public services and many public services recruit volunteers through the Volunteer Centre. Over 650 people contacted the Guildford Volunteer Centre in 2010. The Guildford volunteer centre has been working directly with Community Safety Wardens in north Guildford to encourage more people to become involved in their local community through volunteering. Through a small focus group they have found that people prefer to join in rather than volunteer (which is perceived as less relevant to busy hard pressed people), and as a result they have developed local joining in opportunities in north Guildford that directly benefit the local community. For further information visit

www.voluntaryactionsws.co.uk

Project: Supported Volunteering

Lead organisation: Voluntary Action South West Surrey.

Who's involved: Voluntary Action South West Surrey, Guildford Action and volunteers.

Activity: Voluntary Action South West Surrey is seeking funding to help under represented groups (seldom heard) into volunteering. They have run a pilot project with Guildford Action and if successful with their funding application will also be working with residents of the Guildford hostels. Volunteering brings great benefits not just to the organisation and users that the volunteer helps but also to the volunteer. It can help reduce isolation, help people back into paid work, and help them continue to be involved in their community if they are unable to work. Research has shown that volunteering has a positive effect on people's health.

However, there are many groups who are under represented and find that there are significant barriers preventing them to take part in volunteering. They are often the people who could benefit most from voluntary work. These under represented groups include homeless people, people with mental health problems, those 16-24 year olds not in employment, education or training (NEETS), carers and lone parents. The supported volunteering project aims to find suitable opportunities for people from under represented groups and then provide mentoring to support them in taking up the voluntary activity. The result being increased community engagement with people who otherwise would have found it hard to join in with what is happening in their communities. For further information visit

www.voluntaryactionsws.co.uk

Project: Kingpost Parade environmental improvements, Guildford

Lead organisation: Guildford Borough Council (Planning Services Environmental Projects team)

Who's involved: The local community and shop owners, land owners and the Environmental Projects team.

Activity: As a result of a building development near to Kingpost Parade, funds became available for environmental improvements to the area through a negotiated planning contribution from the development. A consultation took place in 2010 to find out what improvements residents and the community thought most important at the shopping parade. Owners of the shops were contacted and flyers left with tear-off strips for comments. A gazebo was erected on the site to attract shop visitors, and a website page was created to register responses. A meeting was also held at the Sutherland Community Hall where local people could look at the plans and ask any questions they had about the project. Detailed plans have since been drawn up based upon the comments received and these will be

publicised via the Burpham Community Association and by direct contact with the Parade businesses and residents. Notices of the intended work will also be pinned up to inform shoppers and passers-by, shop keepers and residents notified and the website page updated. For further information visit www.guildford.gov.uk/kingpostparade

Project: Neighbourhood panel meetings

Lead organisation: Surrey Police (Safer Neighbourhood teams)

Who's involved: Surrey Police, local residents.

Activity: Organised by Surrey Police's Safer Neighbourhood teams, Neighbourhood Panel meetings are meetings open to all. They are used to determine the priority issues that local people would like the police to concentrate on. Panel Meetings also keep local residents and those working in the area informed about progress made on previous priorities. Meeting times are published on the Safer Neighbourhood Team web page and in Safer Neighbourhood Policing team newsletters. For more information visit www.surrey.police.uk/neighbourhood

Project: Catalytic converter marking

Lead organisation: Surrey Police

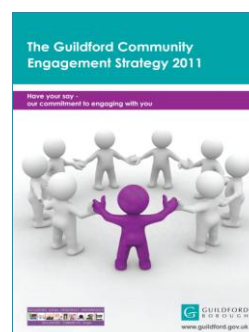
Who's involved: Surrey Police, numerous vehicle retailers on Slyfield Industrial estate, media.

Activity: The Guildford town centre neighbourhoods team launched a prolonged crime prevention initiative with vehicle retailers on an industrial estate where retailers were suffering repeat attacks of theft of catalytic converters. Retailers were losing thousands of pounds in damage/theft of their property. A marking scheme was launched along with a media campaign. Crime levels reduced dramatically as a result, suspects were caught on CCTV attempting to steal a catalytic converter from a van and were captured on CCTV leaving empty handed. The attacked vehicle in question had been marked by Surrey Police on the campaign and was thought to be the deterrent. Positive media around this has helped. For further information visit www.surrey.police.uk

Project: Community engagement strategy consultation

Lead organisation: Guildford Borough Council (Planning Services)

Who's involved: Guildford Borough Council (Planning Services and Corporate Development), Local Strategic Partnership partners and Guildford residents, interest groups and contacts.



Activity: The aim of this project is to produce a document to encourage and set out how local people can get involved and have their say in local issues that affect or interest them. The community engagement strategy guides the Council and its partners (including the county council, police and health service) on how to engage with the local community, interested people and organisations.

To ensure that as many people as possible could comment on the draft strategy it was publicised in an article in the Council newspaper About Guildford (delivered to all Guildford borough residents) before starting a 12 week public consultation period. As part of the consultation a new style eye-catching consultation postcard was designed and posted and

emailed to over 1800 contacts on the Councils consultation database. Posters were displayed local libraries sent information and documents, displays put up at the Council offices, and the consultation advertised on the Council's website as well as some Local Strategic Partnerships websites. The feedback received through the public consultation was taken on board, and the document was amended before it was finally approved on 14 July 2011. For more information please see the Community engagement strategy consultation statement at www.guildford.gov.uk/ces

Have your say...

The Local Strategic Partnership (including Guildford Borough Council, the police and health service) has drafted a community engagement strategy setting out how and when we will engage with you. At the same time the Council has also drafted a community involvement in planning document setting out how and when you can get involved in planning policy and decisions in your area. We'd love to know what you think.

Get in touch and let us know by 2 June 2011 at:

Planning Services
Guildford Borough Council
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Millmead
Guildford
GU2 4BB
email: planningpolicy@guildford.gov.uk
call: 01483 444471

See the draft consultation documents at Guildford Borough Council's planning reception, and Guildford, East Horsley and Ash libraries (please check opening times) or view online at www.guildford.gov.uk/ces.



Get in touch and let us know by 2 June 2011