

What does the Guildford Job Club do?

It does a wonderful job of supporting local unemployed people to help them get themselves into a new job, self-employment or volunteering.

Who can come along?

It is open to all – long term unemployed and recently made redundant, those who have had a career break and those fresh from school, college or university, the less skilled and the professional and of course all ages. It is free and voluntary, and you can join any time.

How is it structured?

It follows a 10-week course wherein people are handheld through the practical and emotional pitfalls of job seeking. It provides a range of practical help from the basics of CV writing, interview skills and job search techniques to help with up-skilling and how to use social media effectively. The Job Club provides a supportive environment full of encouragement and team spirit to help people on their journey. Every fortnight there is a professionally facilitated session, together with 1 to 1 coaching. For the sessions in-between either guest speakers are invited, or they are run by the members themselves to cover the topics they most need to discuss.

In the spirit of localism, everyone can help.

Localism is about the empowerment of local people to come together to take more responsibility for their communities and that is exactly what members and associates of the Job Club are doing. There have been sessions on using social networking, increasing your confidence, helping identify your skillset of transferable skills, personal branding and how to overcome personal barriers to change. Some local business people also give their time to provide practice interviews. So if you are local and could give a session please get in contact.

Who already supports the Job Club?

The Job Club was created about two and a half years ago by Chris Stanton and Richard Fox. I am proud to say that I have been on its management team for a couple of years. It is sponsored by Guildford Borough Council, Surrey Lifelong Learning Partnership, The Community Foundation for Surrey, The Learning Corporation LLP, Surrey Chambers of Commerce and Job Centre Plus. Many local businesses have already been supportive.

Where does it meet?

St Saviour's Church on Woodbridge Road, Guildford, generously provides a room in their centre for the Guildford Job Club to meet every Monday morning during term time from 9.15am-12.30pm.

How has the Job Club idea expanded?

Since its early days the Guildford Job Club has attracted interest from other towns in the South East for advice on how to create their own Job Club. Last July, the Guildford Job club featured on Channel 4's 7 o'clock News. Locally, Work Clubs have been set up more recently, meeting weekly. In Stoke, they meet on Wednesdays 10am-2pm at St Peter's Church, Hazel Avenue,

Bellfields. In Westborough they meet every Friday 10am-2pm at the Park Barn Community Centre, Cabell Road. Both are drop-in clinics, which focus on 1 to 1 support. Laptops are available, kindly provided by the Surrey Lifelong Learning Partnership, which help in (re)writing CVs and covering letters.

An exciting new project - Guildford Job Pub - will start soon at The Stoke Pub & Pizzeria, 103 Stoke Road, to provide a daily drop-in centre from 10am-2pm staffed by volunteers. More volunteers would help make the scheme a long-term reality.

The Guildford Bike Project has just launched. About 40 bikes a month are found by Surrey Police. If re-uniting them with their owners fails then they will be refurbished and repaired and sold on. This will be run as a social enterprise scheme by young unemployed people in the Stoke and Westborough Wards who are keen to learn bike maintenance skills, and supervised by volunteers.

If you would like to volunteer to help, or would like more information on any of these clubs please contact Guildford Job Club co-ordinator, Chris Stanton at cstanton@surreyllp.org.uk or on 07989 712752. But please, just drop in!