

Welcome to ReSkilled's Newsletter



October 2026

ReSkilled Workshop, St Peter's Shared Church, 37 Hazel Avenue, Guildford GU1 1NP

Tel: 07821 198 641 email: piers@reskilled.org

Operating times: **Monday - Thursday 9.15am - 2.45pm**

What happens at ReSkilled?

We thought it might be helpful to give you some insight as to what actually happens each day at ReSkilled! So...

Starting the morning with a cup of coffee, we have a catch up on how everyone's doing and go through what project each person is working on - these are often quite varied, which adds interest for us all. We can then decide who the volunteer will be working with more that day (our volunteers are very versatile!).



As we get down to work, there is often a noticeable contrast switching between an atmosphere of quiet concentration and the noise of the machines (used to speed up several tasks) but everyone works well together - helping, waiting for or watching others - always learning.

Our coffee and lunch breaks are times not just to pause but also ones of truly diverse discussion topics! The dynamics of the group is different on each day, with every individual bringing a range of experiences and interests. It is also a constructive opportunity to air any practical (e.g. housing, utilities) or health difficulties that others may have some insight into - sometimes it's just good to hear a different perspective on an issue. Over the many months that participants attend ReSkilled, bonds and trust gently form, making it a safe space to talk as well as being somewhere to learn practical and transferable work skills.

Common skills that we see develop in each person seem to be: getting into a routine, increasing communication (verbal and messaging us); following given instructions; developing patience and perseverance!

Meanwhile, Piers does a variety of tasks such as sharpening tools, giving advice on techniques, creating designs for commissioned pieces, taking photos/videos for our social media and responding to emails. Most importantly however, every participant and volunteer knows that even if Piers is behind the computer, it is they who are the real priority - everything else will find its time!



Progress

Since the beginning of August, we have had 3 new participants join us - coming through different routes. This has brought our numbers back up having had some successfully move onto volunteering a few months ago. At the same time 2 of our longer-term members are now engaged in various volunteering roles (and a 3rd trying things out); we look forward to seeing them settle into these new opportunities alongside continuing at ReSkilled for the time being, where we can encourage and advise on the gradual transition.

Recently, Piers had contact with 3 former participants from ReSkilled - it was great to hear how they're doing: one is still in their paid role; another has been increasing their voluntary role responsibilities; and the other has just started on a job-seeking programme having volunteered for almost a year now. We really want to know that our participants' progress is long-term, so this has been very encouraging!

Additional benefits

Something that we have observed about the role that ReSkilled can play for participants is in providing continuity whilst they might be experiencing/overcoming health issues. Whether it's a back problem or something else, participants attend across an average of 12 - 18 months which enables us to be here through the difficult times - sometimes cyclical - as we see them gradually grow in confidence, manage their health issues and increase in hope for the future.

This continuity can also be valuable across changes in housing, as those who come to us from supported housing often move up through the available options with their provider, towards long-term council provision. We try to help with: locating furniture (e.g. from Furniturelink or Besom); comparing utilities providers; and how to contact the council as/when needed. This also sometimes involves being flexible in which day the participant attends - switching to another that week if possible, to allow for their sorting pressing issues.

Wooden Products

We are currently developing new products: a stylish oak mirror with a steam-bent frame; a butler's tray (various woods); and an elegant free-standing clock. These each provide challenge, which can be exciting - please follow our social media to see how we do...

Other recent creations include:



Left:
Stone-carving
stand for a
participant



Right:
Puzzle box
commission



Left:
Bird table with
oak supports,
"mahogany"
slatted roof and
bird carving



Bespoke spice rack commission (in oak)

Getting the word out

In August we had a visit from Zoe Franklin MP and the two new West Surrey Shadow Authority Councillors (Masuk and Katie). They were able to see and hear first-hand what ReSkilled does

and the extent to which, as a small organisation, we can help our participants. It also led to a helpful piece of photo publicity in the Surrey Advertiser!



Instagram - we've been posting a variety of images and reels on Instagram (also available on Facebook), learning what people like to view.

Essentially we've discovered for ourselves what many others know, that videos get the most views - compilations or not (just not still photos, even as a video reel). Please do have a look and see what we're doing between our biannual newsletters.



Supporting ReSkilled

We have been kindly awarded grants from two trusts that account for 50% of our funding for the next 3 years. This gives us the perfect opportunity to focus on **increasing** the number of people, with whom ReSkilled resonates, who would be happy to support ReSkilled financially on a regular basis (aiming for the balancing 50%). If you know of others who might appreciate the value of what we do, please forward or pass on this newsletter - every donation makes a difference!

If you're interested in supporting us financially, please email:

treasurer@reskilled.org or pop in to speak to Piers. We can also claim Gift Aid if appropriate. For one-off donations, please use the **QR code** which will take you to our website's *Donate* page.



Prayer requests

We can **give thanks**

- that new participants have started at ReSkilled and most are attending consistently
- for the two grants that we received, helping build stability

Please **pray for**

- us to be effective in our publicity, attracting donors more widely
- those still experiencing barriers to their attending ReSkilled consistently (for a variety of reasons out of their control)



Upcoming Events

- **Saturday 5th December - St Mary's Church, Quarry Street, Guildford.**

We will be taking part in their Christmas Fair from 12pm - 3pm.

It's a beautiful church to visit - please come and see us there. We have lots of stock that could make good Christmas presents...

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Thank you for your interest and support in every way.

May we all be "working to restore hope" together!

You are very welcome to come and visit us in the workshop – please just ring or email beforehand.

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