

Community Matters



OSBORNE



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Covering

Eastbourne, Hastings,
Hemel Hempstead, Mole Valley,
Waltham Forest & Winchester

Welcome to Community Matters!

Summer has well and truly arrived with the hottest day on record for July hitting temperatures of 36.7C - it was hotter here than in Rome!

Our enthusiasm to embrace the summer weather has seen us out and about supporting local communities and activities. Amongst these, we have created a sensory quiz, built an interactive workstation which was rolled out across a number of events giving people the opportunity to explore, as well as saving a train!



This bright and busy issue will give you an idea of our continued commitment to communities across areas such as employability, health & wellbeing and much more!

Happy reading.

Graca Machado

Graca Machado, Customer Experience Director

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So far.....

£649,211
added value
provided through
sponsorships,
training and
hours

5,205
staff hours
devoted to
community
initiatives

41
community facilities
improved

33
apprentices
employed in
trades and admin
positions

161
community
initiatives
supported

11,311
people engaged
through community
events

Orchard Apples



Osborne supported the information Open Day for the proposed Northend Community Orchard. Organised by the Tenant Involvement Team at Dacorum Borough Council, the event encouraged people to come and find out about the orchard and have a go at apple pressing with the Sunnyside Rural Trust.

Our team organised a free raffle for the event with our subcontractor SJ Electrical providing the prizes which included a Kindle, Argos vouchers and a selection of children's games. Our mascot Rosie also made a welcomed appearance to join the children and their families in some giant fun games. It was great to see the enthusiasm and support from local customers who were really keen to find out about the orchard and also share their ideas.

“ I thought the event went well and this is such a great idea – I'm happy to be involved and my grandchildren are looking forward to the planting event in October. They really enjoyed being able to press the apples and taste the juice and the magic beans are doing well!

Local Resident



Supporting the South Hill Centre

We have been supporting a local job club run by the South Hill Centre. They run a free drop-in support group for anyone who is unemployed, under-employed, threatened with redundancy or starting themselves up in self-employment. Staff and volunteers at the centre work so hard to consistently develop new ways to engage with attendees and have now linked up with the DENS Foodbank to add another service to the sessions.

Osborne has been attending the centre once a month so that we can help local people with job searches, CVs and general careers advice. The service relies on volunteers which is why our time can be so valuable. It enables local people to gain an insight into today's workplace and the skills and attributes employers are looking for.

We are working with Operations and Development Manager, Jeremy and his team to explore ways to work further with the centre. We hope to run interview practice sessions and organise some joint volunteer projects with attendees of the Club.



Photo Fun

For the second year running, we were pleased to support our friends at the Osborne School in Winchester for their Summer Fayre.

We arrived with something a little different this year - a photo speed camera! With huge thanks to Speedypix who kindly donated the use of the equipment, everyone was able to jump in front of the lense for a funny photo, with a keyring memento to take away. This was a huge attraction and contributed to the amazing total raised at the fayre of £2,384.07! The funds raised will go a long way in getting play equipment for the students.



Woodland Wonderland

By getting to know our friends at the South Hill Centre, we were led to another community initiative at their Young Discoverers Pre-School, which is also held in the Centre during term time.

Forest School provides children with the opportunity to achieve and develop confidence through hands-on learning in a woodland area. The idea is to encourage them to identify and take risks when outside and be able to develop positive relationships with other people.

To get started, the group had a woodland area which, although was ideal in space, needed clearing and cutting back to be suitable for the children's activities. Keen to help an environmentally-friendly and educational project, our team spent the day at the site, cutting back weeds and filling eight bags of rubble. A job well done!

“ A massive thank you to the Osborne team who all did a fantastic job with clearing our wooded site at Young Discoverers. I spent today getting the last preparations done for tomorrow's first session when the children will get to explore the area, have a snack and go on a gruffalo hunt.

Kelly
Young Discoverers Pre-School



The Next Generation

Our Community Investment Team joined other local businesses and spent the day with students from Longdean School to support them as part of an Employability Skills Day. Connect Dacorum organised the event which saw two hundred Year 10 pupils from Longdean School get involved.

Split into groups of eight, the pupils took part in CV writing and interview skills activities, as well as discussing options around future employment. We helped the students conduct mock interviews and they even had a go at "speed interviewing"!

The feedback from the students was extremely positive - they felt they came away with helpful advice about how a good CV should look, as well as useful tips for sitting a successful interview.



“ I would like to say a huge thank you for volunteering your time last week at Longdean School. The feedback from the students has been amazing. ”

Cindy Withey
Connect Dacorum



Trinity, a charity based in Winchester, works tirelessly to improve the lives of those affected by homelessness and social deprivation.

Their aim is to empower all their service users with the confidence, skills and willpower to change their lives for the good and on a long-term basis. We're continuing our support of their Job Club by delivering mock interviews, which help provide vital practical and emotional support to those wishing to enter employment.

Lasting Change



Engineering Excellence

We helped support seven teams of Year 2 pupils from schools across the Eastbourne area, who took part in the exciting 'Bloodhound SSC' event.

The challenge was organised by the Eastbourne Education Business Partnership as part of its annual Engineering Club programme, and celebrated the great British land speed project to exceed 1000mph!



The children's key focus was on the manufacture and dimension of the wheels - they found out early on that accuracy was crucial for a smooth and straight run during testing. The cars were effectively powered by air-pressure using a fizzy water bottle and air pump - whoosh!

We were thrilled to be a part of this educational initiative which was not only fun, but helped the children develop their teamworking and practical building skills!



Interview Inspiration

Organised by training provider, Future Focus, we visited Walthamstow Academy to help nearly a hundred Year 10 students with mock interviews and techniques in preparation for finding work after education.

For many students, this was their first interview experience, and there were certainly feelings of apprehension!

Elaine, Rob and Neal from Osborne spent the day working on a one-to-one basis with students. They offered constructive advice on the students' completed mock job application forms and then went onto offer interview tips and tricks and guidance on career aspirations.

“ It was a really good experience! It was great to meet these young people to give them a taste of the interview process. Some of the students are amazingly ambitious and driven! They all did really well! ”

Elaine Tesalona, Osborne



Work Experience Diary

Almost a year ago, we met Hugo at a community careers event in Winchester, where he showed a great interest in joining us. So, when he got back in touch with us earlier in this year, we welcomed the opportunity to introduce him on a work experience placement. Whilst with us, Hugo completed a work experience diary - take a look at what he said:

Monday

At the beginning I felt nervous, but I didn't need to worry. I was first issued with my PPE (personal protective equipment), and then had an HSE (health, safety, environment) induction where I learnt a lot. After that, I got to go out on site and visit a property where flooring was being replaced because of a leaky dishwasher. I also got involved with the final stages of jobs to check the residents are satisfied and a green card is written. This meant going to speaking with the residents - they were always satisfied! I helped on a number of emergency responses too.



Wednesday

Wednesday was all about inspections - I helped conduct the post-inspections for a number of properties. This involved checking the windows and lights, recording the gas and electric meters and videoing the property. After we had completed this on each property, we prepared the packs containing all labelled keys, the inspection video and gas & electric certificates. That afternoon, I also got to shadow the Administration Assistant who had to invoice for the work the Quantity Surveyor had priced. It was really interesting to see how this process works.

Thursday

I was paired up with one of the team's plumbers on Thursday. The first job of the morning was to try and fix a leaking shower in a sheltered accommodation block. We reduced the volume of water leaking out of the shower tap by cleaning the filter and new was also ordered to be fitted at a later date. We received an emergency job to unblock a toilet but luckily on arrival the toilet had cleared! After lunch we replaced a ball float valve in a toilet to stop a leak. When I returned back to the office, I enjoyed spending more time with the Quantity Surveyor working through the PDA (personal digital assistant) data.

Friday

I started the day with a site inspection of a void - a property without a resident. We checked the progress of the job and estimated the time it would take to finish. I compared that to the deadline and it showed the void would be completed on the due date which is good! I also visited a property for planned works which consisted of a new kitchen and bathroom (the resident lives there whilst the work is carried out). I observed void scheduling, as well as the opening and closing of a job on the computer software. We also visited a job to replace a kitchen for planned works. We designed the kitchen and I priced the job using the schedule of rates. It was a really interesting day and week, and I learnt a lot which I'm looking forward to putting into practice one day!



Osborne Opportunities

To celebrate our new partnership with Youth Connexions, we held a launch lunch for Osborne's new work experience programme for local schools.



Youth Connexions provides a link between schools and businesses to help organise and oversee work experience placements for their students. Keen to form relationships with local schools and create more placements for young people, we have been working with Youth Connexions to ensure we have everything in place to accommodate students throughout the next school year.

The launch focussed on the importance of work experience for young people, the health and safety requirements from us as a business, and also how the partnership would work together to ensure positive experiences of the construction industry.

Joining us for the event were students Jack Daley and William Webster who have piloted the programme for us.

Our Community Investment Co-Ordinator, Hannah Bailey, caught up with Jack a couple of days into his placement to see how he was finding the experience. Over a cup of 'builders tea' in the local cafe, Jack beamed with enthusiasm. He said that he was really enjoying it and was pleased to be teamed up with our operative Ian, who was actively encouraging Jack to try different elements of the job. At the end of the placement our team awarded Jack with a Certificate of Achievement and thanked him for his hard work.



“ It's clear Osborne is taking the issue of investing in the local community and giving opportunities to young people seriously. The Work Experience partnership with Youth Connexions is clearly going to have a positive impact on young people and hopefully attract some of them into social housing in the future. ”

Elliott Brooks
Dacorum Borough Council

Fun in the Sun



Our mascot, Rosie, was just one of the 500 residents who turned out for the annual Ascham Residents Day - the biggest turnout yet!

Despite a month's worth of rain the day before, the sun shone making the family fun day one to remember with a huge array of activities catering for all ages and abilities. Children were entertained with African drumming lessons, face painting or they could opt for one of the many circus skills sessions, whilst some residents took a relaxing Thai Chi class.

Our eager team were keen to get involved and support the event, arriving with a purpose-built interactive work station, allowing residents to learn how to change a tap washer, as well being on-hand to answer any queries they had. There was a brilliant atmosphere across the day, with everyone coming together to enjoy the activities.



This year the Annual Tenant Forum in Dacorum was organised with an element of 'fun!' With lots of games and things to do, it proved a huge success.

Hosted at the Hemel Hempstead School in Boxmoor, there were rides, music, huge inflatables, face painting and much, much more - a perfect way to spend the day with family and friends. It all got a little too much for Rosie who took five to chill with the residents!

Of course, we were keen to get involved, and donated a raffle prize of a hamper full of delicious goodies, as well as being available to speak with residents over any questions they had.

Maria from our Dacorum team designed a rather novel competition - 'Guess the number of repair jobs carried out from July 14 to July 15 on our Dacorum contract'. The answer is 26,366!



The BIG Lunch

The Big Lunch is a very simple idea from the Eden Project in Cornwall. The aim is to get as many people as possible across the whole of the UK to have lunch with their neighbours annually on the first Sunday in June in a simple act of community, friendship and fun. Since its launch in 2009, thousands of Big Lunches have taken place across many different communities.

It was a beautiful sunny day and a great event to lunch with our friends and neighbours. Mubina, Hannah, Tijen and Neal from Osborne all arrived early to help with the celebration set-up. Complete with our lolly lucky dip, the team had a fantastic time enjoying the seventh year of The BIG Lunch.

The party held at Priory Court Community Centre kicked off with a mini carnival winding its way from William Morris Big Local Partnership Members, and involved songs, dancing and costumes from lots of different cultures.



In 2014, 4.83 million people took to their streets, gardens and community spaces for the annual Big Lunch.

“ I would like to thank you from the bottom of my heart and on behalf of William Morris Big Local Partnership Members. Thanks for all of your contributions, in terms of support by your colleagues on the day of the festival. Everyone really enjoyed your mascot. ”

Rubenna
William Morris

Street Meet

Winchester City Council Neighbourhoods Team organised for an action day where residents came together to help spring clean their local area.

Working alongside the Neighbourhood Team and the volunteers from the Winchester Student Hub, we helped them to dispose of their old rubbish into the skips provided by the Council, as well as sprucing up areas. In the afternoon the Street Meet provided information and advice stands.



Test Your Senses

AgeUK Friendship Teas give older people a chance to meet others in a similar situation to themselves. They are an ideal way for people to get out and about and take part in activities such as singing and chair-based exercises.

Keen to support such a valuable service, we recently hosted two cream tea afternoons, where we created our very own Senses Quiz.

Our Community Investment Co-Ordinator Hannah designed the quiz based on her experiences of working with the local community and their needs.

Each round was based on exploring one of the senses. The 'smell' round for examples saw teams guessing the contents of a number of tubs, including cinnamon and mint sauce! There was also a guess the TV show from the theme tune challenge for the 'sound' round and a 'what's in the bag' activity to explore the sense of touch.



Both afternoons were very well received by all those who attended.

Winners at Southernwood Close, 'The Cream of the Crop' said: " We had a fantastic time at the cream tea/quiz afternoon. It was lovely to meet the Osborne team and to be waited on by them! They were very friendly and pleasant. It was an afternoon enjoyed by all - thank you very much for a fun time. P.S. when's the next one? "

Designers in the Making

Developing our relationship with Mencap, our team went along to their social SWAN evening. Geared up with white t-shirts, fabric pens and stencils everybody had the chance to get creative and decorate their own t-shirt to take home. All of the designers were so enthusiastic and it was great to see how much they engaged with the activity.

At the end of the night, a Mencap volunteer had the tough job of picking the two best t-shirts! Tamsin and Sophia were the lucky winners, receiving some chocolates and an Osborne goody bag to take home.

Tracey from the charity got in touch to say: "Everyone had a lot of fun and what fantastic t-shirts. Thank you so much for taking the time to spend with our members."



Sensory Success

What could we do with some off-cuts of wood that would benefit our community? The answer was easy; lets build some sensory boards for our friends at Joseph Clarke School in Walthamstow, supporting children with visual impairment.

We teamed up with our supply chain partners for this initiative with donations from Travis Perkins and Crown Paints.

The bright, colourful boards were designed to be attractive for pupils with some vision, but the carved shapes can be accessed through touch. In the design stages, we wanted to ensure that pupils who use a wheelchair would also benefit and therefore made sure that the boards would sit off the ground.

Each of the six boards is themed - from sea creatures to transport to insects and has stimulated a fabulous amount of playground chatter.

“ Our pupils are thrilled to have friends from outside agencies visiting and the construction crew were an enormous success when they met the pupils, helped them to communicate effectively and explained what they had personally done to bring the project to fruition. The boards are being used regularly and there is a lot of laughter and enjoyment. ”

Maureen Duncan
Joseph Clarke School



Running for Rennie

Rennie Grove Hospice Care is a Hemel Hempstead based charity providing care and support for patients diagnosed with cancer and other life-limiting illnesses, and offering added support for their families. This July saw their first Hemel 10k and 1.5k Superhero Fun Run to raise money in the local community.

We teamed up with our partners and friends at Dacorum to create a team of runners for the 10k. They all did really well, finishing the race in some excellent times and were still able to stand at the end!



Colin Ivey, Corporate Partnership Manager at Rennie Grove, got in touch after the event to say, "It was great having Osborne involved and you certainly helped to make the running of the event a lot easier. I know our events team would welcome you whenever we are in the Dacorum area. Thanks to you all at Osborne for the help and the goodies!"

Osborne also sponsored the end of race refreshments for the day to make sure all of the runners had plenty of fruit and cakes to top up their energy. We also helped the organisers with handing out medals and water.

Rosie joined us on the day and took part in the warm up with the superhero fun runners and handed out their medals at the end. It was a really great event that we were so pleased to be a part of, raising money and supporting such a worthy cause.



**Total Raised for Rennie Grove.....£1,595
Well done Team Osborne!**

Sizzling Fun

Winchester and District Young Carers aim to improve the lives of children and young people with caring responsibilities by providing safe, quality support to individuals and offering an inclusive approach which considers the needs of the whole family.

Every year they organise a summer BBQ for the young carers and their families, bringing them all together for a relaxed evening to enjoy games, food and laughter.

We joined the many volunteers for the second year to support the Young Carers and contributed towards the BBQ, provided raffle prizes as well being around to offer a helping hand during the evening.



The event welcomed just over 80 people from families across the area who had the opportunity to get involved in many activities from nail and face painting, crafts, snooker or the Osborne Football Shoot Out!

Gemma from our Winchester contract got lucky and won a box of lip glosses in the raffle. However, noticing earlier in the evening a quiet young carer, Gemma was quick to pass on her prize to the very thankful teenager.



Creative Flair

This summer we travelled down the coastline to Hastings where we joined the Tuesday evening club for Young Carers.

Once a week, young carers from in and around Hastings attend their club to take part in activities that they enjoy, giving them a break from their normal responsibilities at home.

Stacey and Neal, armed with a box of white t-shirts and an assortment of fabric pens in every colour possible, got ready for the creative flair to unleash as they tasked the club to get busy designing their own individual t-shirts.



With personalities expressed through their designs, a fashion show followed so that everyone could see the great works of their friends.



Let the Games Begin...

On a warm summer Saturday, our team arrived to support The Herts Learning Disability Games, organised by Dacorum Sportspace. This annual event provides an opportunity for adults with learning disabilities to compete in a fun and exciting day of races and agility challenges.



The eight competing local charities arrived in their team coloured t-shirts with bags of enthusiasm for a day of team work and energetic activity. Our team were paired with an activity leader and allocated to a station - Jason helped staff the hoola hoop and skipping challenge, Neal was on hand for the soft javelin, Nibs was helping the beanbag throw and Jo was helping with the infamous balancing bean bag

After lunch it was time for the track races and Osborne were there to cheer on our Dacorum Mencap team. Jason then joined the Mencap volunteers for the volunteer relay race who came second with a medal to prove it!



Perfect Partnership

Riverwood is Greenwich Mencap's wood workshop, where people with learning disabilities learn different carpentry skills and make some amazing items from wood that would otherwise be thrown away.

When we found out that the Osborne School in Winchester required picnic benches designed specifically to accommodate their wheelchair users, we knew that Riverwood would be able to help.

Osborne School explained what they needed and Riverwood designed and produced the products especially for them.

From Greenwich to Winchester, the bespoke benches and planters travelled in our van arriving in time for an afternoon activity. Students of Osborne School got busy with paints left over from a previous community event to finish the benches, ready for the summer..



Ascham Connects

We look forward to working on the Ascham Connects initiative each year as the drive to improve gardens, communal areas and general tidy ups has a true value to those living in the community.



This year the activities were scheduled over two days, reaching 20 estates and sheltered blocks.

Joined by staff of Ascham Homes, we were pleased to support two sheltered schemes, Plaxton Court in Leytonstone, and Pelly Court in Walthamstow. Working in the garden area, we built and planted a raised flower bed as well as sprucing up the area with a fresh lick of paint. We also repaired a number of benches so residents could sit back and enjoy the work that had been done.

Neal Allison, our Community Investment Manager, who assisted with the gardening work and spruce ups, said: "It was inspiring to see how residents have already started making improvements to their gardens themselves. I'm glad that the Ascham Homes and Osborne teams could give them a little more help and support."



Tall Towers

When Heather Gomm joined Osborne earlier in the year for a work experience placement, she mentioned that in her own time she ran a local Brownie group, with only twelve girls at the Greenhills Day Centre in Hemel Hempstead.

To support the group, Osborne went along to an evening to help out. We then returned a week later to give the girls a session on construction. First they shared ideas about building, safety on site, then we set them the classic challenge of building a tower out of marshmallows and spaghetti, which needed to be able to hold an Osborne duck!

For the first attempt we didn't give them any hints. The second time around, we looked at things they could think about, such as triangles being strong shapes and the importance of having a sturdy base. This got brains ticking and gave them ideas of how to do the challenge again. The edible towers this time were much stronger and taller. The winning team received an Osborne goody bag to take home. It was fantastic to see a group of young girls thinking about construction - go girls!



Work Ready?

Stacey McAllister and Neal Allison from our team here at Osborne were keen to support a programme at Claverham Community College which aims to give students an opportunity to learn about the skills they will need for the world of work. Students at Hastings College were provided with the chance to develop their understanding of "soft skills", develop their personal attributes, learn new interview techniques and also understand how to sell themselves in the employment market.

With us taking a lead on presenting a good versus bad interview to the students, we were then asked for the Year 10 students' observations on what went wrong and how we could have avoided the 'bad' situation. There was also an interesting workshop that was organised to help students understand how to best manage future personal finance.

The closing challenge tasked groups to make paper shapes to a specific size and sell them to us. This opportunity saw students adding value to their products with colours and designs. Great thought and consideration was shown in this task helping to enhance their negotiating skills whilst building confidence.

“ Another well run and organised day. Thank you very much! Very well planned, structured and meaningful activity. Appropriate level of challenge and engagement for all pupils. A valuable learning experience for all. ”

Claverham College staff



Meet the Team

We like getting to know our communities and wanted to give residents of Mole Valley the opportunity to join us at an open house event, so that they could come and meet our team who are working on a number of planned works projects in the area.

Clint, our Contracts Manager, loaded with tea and biscuits, set up base at a local church hall where local residents popped in throughout the day.

This event also gave residents the chance to ask any questions relating to the planned works being carried out.



All aboard!

The Repair Shed provides a supportive environment in which older men (50+) who are practically-minded can make things, do repairs, share skills and learn new ones.

Manager, Chris and his team were asked by the Margaret Foster Play Centre (pre-school for 3-5 year olds) to help them out with their outdoor play area. Due to the town's re-development plans in Hemel Hempstead, the Nicky Line Express Play Train was going to be thrown away. Stepping in to the rescue, the play centre saved the train as they had a group of excited children who they knew would love it!

The Repair Shed jumped aboard to become involved with the project by agreeing to clean up and paint the train ready for the children to play on. We were keen to support so our supplier, Crown Paints, kindly donated the metal paint for the project.

Our Osborne team then worked with members of Repair Shed to get the train ready for departure!

This has been a great example of true partnership work within the local community and we look forward to working with The Repair Shed and Community Action Dacorum, who organised this project, again in the coming months.



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Events Calendar

Here are some of the activities planned for the next couple of months.

September

19th - Community Repair Day & Sunnyside Event in Dacorum
23rd - Careers Event at Kings School in Winchester
Improving access facilities to a vegetable garden at a Day Centre in Walthamstow
Building a herb garden for local service users

October

17th - Northend Community Orchard Planting Day in Dacorum
The Osborne Express is on track to move to a new location!
Launch of the Christmas Card design

November

Post-Halloween fun