

Celebrating 10 years of local community magazine publishing

Vantage Publishing, publishers of VantagePoint, was set up in 2009 with the sole purpose of producing a brand new free community magazine for the Godalming area.

Its founder, Stefan Reynolds, had the idea after being involved in a government sponsored market town appraisal, which had found that there was a need “to improve the availability of information to residents and visitors”. This confirmed his view that there was no easy way for local people to find out about all the community events taking place.

Having lived in the town since 1973 and with a background in publishing, Stefan decided to leave his job and embark on a new career in local magazine publishing. The first magazine was published in April 2009, and was delivered for free by the Royal Mail to 16,487 homes in the Godalming area. It was well received as it uniquely concentrated on the local area, with charity news, community and events information as well as articles written by and for local people.

In July 2009, Marcus Atkins joined as a partner to look after the sales side of the business and in October 2009, a second magazine was launched covering the Farnham area, adding a further 21,331 local homes. A Haslemere edition followed in June 2010 followed by a Guildford issue in April 2011. Cranleigh was added to the Godalming issue in August 2011, bringing the circulation up to 79,362 – a near five-fold increase since it launched.

The biggest change happened in January 2014 when the magazines were re-branded and VantagePoint was launched. At that point, Midhurst and Petworth were added to the Haslemere issue and in April 2014 the Dorking issue was launched. In October 2016,

East & West Horsley joined the Guildford issue and Leatherhead was added to the Dorking issue, taking the total circulation to more than 120,500 copies every month.

“Cornmeter started advertising with Vantage Publishing in their first magazine in April 2009 and we have advertised with them every single month since. We always get a great response and I love the fact that we almost always see the magazine in every house we visit when fitting blinds and curtains.” John Taylor, Cornmeter DIY

In addition, we have just over 19,000 e-newsletter subscribers and also promote our customers and community events via various social media channels.

The company is based in Godalming, right in the middle of the VantagePoint circulation area, enabling easy interaction with local businesses, charities and organisations. It helps to be in the heart of the local community as this gives the business and staff a much better understanding of what goes on around them.

All those who work for and with us are based locally, many of them having lived in the area for more than 40 years. Nick and Angie Crisell, Marcus’s in-laws, have been with us since we started as our original Jotters, and Jane Gosnell started in 2016 to help with Jottings and credit control. On the sales side, we have Jesse, Claire and our latest recruit Sarah, and Alex was recently appointed to work on graphic design and social media.

“I met Marcus Atkins at a networking event seven years ago. I did not have much faith in advertising, but Marcus persuaded me to advertise with VantagePoint. I am very glad that I did. It has been brilliant for my business and I have found the staff at VantagePoint unfailingly helpful and efficient.” Susan Shaw, Shaws Wills and Trusts

David Pakeman joined us in 2016 as a non-executive director and Marcus's wife Sarah does bulk deliveries for us every month to various places across the region, including libraries, cafés and surgeries. We are also very grateful to our regular contributors including Phil Kemp, Beth Otway, Kirstie Smillie, Andy Goundry and Zoe Blake.

Since starting in 2009, the ethos of the business has been to support everything local. Through the Jottings section, which appears in each magazine, well over 350 local charities, community groups, organisations and schools have their events promoted free of charge every month.

The majority of advertisers continue to be local, as are the contributors and writers. Supporting a local business supports the local community, and we were very proud to receive the Trade Mark Surrey Hills last year for our services doing just that.

Here's to the next 10 years!