

Help wanted to run youth club

A SUCCESSOR is being sought to take over the running of a highly popular youth club.

Ronnie Wilkie, who runs the Kotch club in Ascot, is set to retire at the end of the year and is searching for someone to keep the youth club running and keep anti-social behaviour in the area as low as possible.

Kotch offers youngsters aged between 14 and 16 a place to go on a Friday between 7-11pm where they can play pool, hang out with friends, listen to music and spray graffiti onto designated boards in the club.

Mr Wilkie, who is operations director at Ascot Racecourse, said: "I am very grateful to all the adult helpers at the club but we are still looking for more volunteers.

"We need five people each club night and ideally I would like to get a pool of around 20 people, including some young people.

"When club members reach 18 years of age they can no longer be a member of Kotch and we are encouraging them to stay involved with the club by becoming a volunteer to run it."

The club Kotch, which means "chill", aims to get kids off the street and there has been a noticeable difference in the catchment of Ascot, Sunninghill and Sunningdale.

Mr Wilkie added: "The amount of graffiti which was around Ascot High Street a year ago has now gone down by around 80%.

"Ascot Racecourse used to spend around £70,000 to remove graffiti from around the area but in the last year we have spent around only £200."

Royal Borough ward councillor for Ascot, David Hilton, is an avid supporter of the club and is pleased with how successful the youth group has been.

He said: "I think what is specifically different

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about Kotch is that the local youth have been so involved. The most important thing is that they have ownership of the club.

"Ronnie Wilkie deserves an awful lot of credit, first of all for working with these kids, many of who gave him a hard time at the beginning, and then for getting people in to help."

Anyone interested in volunteering to help run the club should contact Mr Wilkie on 01344 878549.