

18th Epping Forest South Scout Group

Annual General Meeting

Wednesday 16th September 2020



AGENDA

1. Welcome by the Group Chairman – Mr Paul Plane
2. Apologies for Absence
3. Approval of the minutes of the last AGM (circulated)
4. Group reports with comments by the Group Scout Leader
5. Financial report with comments by the Group Treasurer
6. Appointments:
 - Election of Group Administrators:
 - a) To approve the GSL nomination for group chairman - Paul Plane
 - b) To elect the group Secretary - Jan Nicholls
 - c) To elect the group Treasurer – Steve Ladle
 - Election of Group Executive Committee members:
 - d) To approve the GSL nominations – Alison Charnock
 - e) To elect further members – Laura Joiner
 - Election of Social Committee:
 - f) Chairperson – Alison Philips
 - g) Further members – Sharon Clare
7. Receive suggestions for social events
8. Announcement of awards
9. Chairman's closing remarks

18th Epping Forest South Scout Group
Minutes of the previous Group AGM held on Wednesday 22nd May 2019
at the New Endeavour.

1. Welcome by the acting Chairman Brian Gillman

The Chairman welcomed the members of the Group and Parents.

2. Apologies for absence:

Paul Plane (Chairman), Alison Charnock (late)

3. Approval of Minutes of the last Annual General Meeting (Circulated)

The minutes were accepted and approved unanimously.

4. Group Reports (Circulated)

The GSL reported that all sections are running well with excellent programmes and activities. Parents were encouraged to help with the sections activities and should see GSL to arrange a DBS check. A letter will be circulated shortly asking for volunteers to help paint the hall woodwork. Parents were reminded that when activities are arranged replies should be sent in promptly to secure a place. If the child is unable to attend notice should be given prior to event. "No shows" are charged by the district and these costs will be passed on to the parents in future. Parents were asked to remind their children that mobile phones are not to be used in meetings without permission. Thanks and applause were given to the Leaders for their continued hard work.

5. Financial Report (Circulated)

The Treasurer reported that we have had another healthy year financially. The minibus fund has been topped up again and is building up nicely and is likely to be used in the coming year. The surplus is slightly lower due to expenditure on the 100 year anniversary celebrations and subsidisation of events. Parents have continued to ease the administration of the accounts by using the Gift Aid Forms, bank transfers and paying promptly. Subs have remained at the same level for the last 10 years and will not be increased this year. The accounts have been independently reviewed and approved, the adoption was proposed by Alison Charnock, seconded by Joanne Roberts and were unanimously accepted by the meeting. The Treasurer thanked the Leaders for their hard work, support of the children and for teaching skills to be carried forward into their future lives.

6. Appointment/Election of Group Administrators

- a) **Group Chairman:** Paul Plane (absent) nominated by GSL and approved by the meeting.
- b) **Group Secretary:** Jan Nicholls, proposed by Abby Wright-Parkes, seconded by Davina Enebeli.
- c) **Group Treasurer:** Steve Ladle, proposed by Laura Joiner, seconded by Julia McFall.
- d) **Group Executive Committee:** GSL nominated Alison Charnock, Lizzy Adshead, Miriam Wilson, Jenny Burbage. Approved.
- e) **Other nominations/Social Committee:** Noelle O'Connor, Michelle Treacher, Steve Terrington, Krysia Barbuli, Sharon Clare, Abby Wright-Parkes and Laura Joiner were unanimously approved by the meeting.

7. Suggestions for Social Events

Any ideas for social events should be taken to the Leaders or Social Committee for consideration.

8. Presentation of Awards

Badges and Achiever of the year awards were presented to the Scout, Cub and Beavers. Thanks were given to the Committee & Leaders for their continued hard work. Presentations and thanks were given to Chairman, Treasurer and Secretary.

18th Epping Forest South Scout Group

REPORT OF THE TRUSTEES

Year ended 31st March 2020

The Trustees present the report and accounts for the year ended 31st March 2020.

The 18th Epping Forest South Scout Group is a registered charity, number 303802.

Objectives and Activities

The Group is part of the Scout Association set up by Royal Charter in 1912. The objects of the Scout movement are the promotion and development of young people in achievement of their physical, intellectual, social and spiritual potential as individuals as responsible citizens and members of their local, national and international communities. As such, the Group is managed and run under the terms of the Scout Association's Policy, Organisation and Rules which provides appropriate guidance regarding safeguarding, risk management, volunteer management, complaints procedures and financial controls.

The Group provides a diverse range of educational, sporting and fun activities for its members that belong to the Beavers, Cubs and Scouts sections within the Group. In planning and carrying out these activities the Executive Committee kept in mind the Charity Commission's guidance on public benefit at the regular trustee meetings.

Trustees

The charity is administered by the Executive Committee. A number of these are appointed ex officio i.e. The Group Chairman; The Group Scout Leader (GSL); The Group Secretary; The Group Treasurer; and the Beaver, Cub and Scout Leaders. The first four of these are the charity's nominated trustees. The remaining Committee members are either appointed by the GSL or elected by the Group's members at the Annual General Meeting.

The Executive Committee for this year was comprised of:

Paul Plane	Chairman
Brian Gillman	Group Scout Leader
Steve Ladle	Treasurer
Jan Nicholls	Secretary
Dave Matson	Scout Leader
Ian Balboa	Cub Leader
Gary Tong	Beaver Leader
Alison Charnock	Committee Member
Laura Joiner	Committee Member
Liz Adshead	Committee Member
Jenny Burbage	Committee Member
Miriam Wilson	Committee Member
Alison Phillips	Social Committee Member

Group Executive Committee

The Group Executive Committee exists to support the Group Scout Leader in meeting the responsibilities of the Group and is responsible for:

The maintenance of Group property;
The raising of funds and the administration of Group finance;
The insurance of persons, property and equipment;
Group public occasions;
Assisting in the recruitment of leaders and other adult support;
Appointing any sub committees that may be required;

Reserves Policy

The Group's policy on reserves is to hold sufficient resources to continue the charitable activities of the group should income and fundraising activities fall short. The Group Executive Committee considers that the group should hold a sum equivalent to 6 months running costs, circa £7,000.

It also looks at major items which will need eventual replacement the most significant of which is the Minibus. To this end the Group is building up separate reserves such that when the Minibus is due for replacement there would be sufficient funds available to purchase a replacement thus avoiding the need for large scale fund raising projects in the future.

The Group also has an endowment which was bequeathed to it a number of years ago. Under the rules of the bequest the Group is not allowed to use the Capital, but instead should use any interest from the endowment on providing benefits for the Group's youth members. The Group achieves this by using these funds to support additional activities at a subsidised cost. These funds, whilst included in the Group's accounts, are managed separately by a group of four trustees including one independent of the Group.

Risk Management

The Executive Committee also considers the key risks which may affect its continued existence. These are considered to be the following:

1. Reduced income from fund raising. The Group is primarily reliant upon income from subscriptions and fundraising. The group does hold a reserve to ensure the continuity of activities should there be a major reduction in income. The Committee could raise the value of subscriptions to increase the income to the group on an ongoing basis, either temporarily or permanently.
2. Reduction or loss of leaders. The group is totally reliant upon volunteers to run and administer the activities of the group. If there was a reduction in the number of leaders to an unacceptable level in a particular section or the group as a whole then there would have to be a contraction, consolidation or closure of a section. In the worst case scenario the complete closure of the Group.
3. Reduction or loss of members. The Group provides activities for all young people aged 6 to 14. If there was a reduction in membership in a particular section or the group as whole then there would have to be a contraction, consolidation or closure of a section. In the worst case scenario the complete closure of the Group.

Internal Control

The group has in place systems of internal controls that are designed to provide reasonable assurance against material mismanagement or loss, these include 2 signatories for all payments and comprehensive insurance policies to ensure that insurable risks are covered.

Public Benefit

The Group meets the Charity Commission's public benefit criteria under both the advancement of education and the advancement of citizenship or community development headings.

Summary of the main achievements of the year

Many activities have taken place over the past year. Please see the various section reports for details.

18th Epping Forest South Scout Group

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT 2019/2020

The Strangest Scouting Year

Now that we have reached the end of the strangest ever scouting year it is time for our annual report. Although officially this report covers the financial year to 31st March 2020, we cannot ignore the effect that the pandemic has had. Until March, everything was normal, from the middle of March, everything changed. The pandemic greatly affected everything that we would normally do in the summer term. There have been no face-to-face meetings, we have been unable to hold our Annual General Meeting and Awards evening and, of course, no camps. Nevertheless, our leaders have been able to run indoor activities remotely since the March lockdown using Zoom and the feedback from these has been very positive.

In late July and again in early September, the Executive Committee and leaders met to discuss the way forward and how we will re-introduce scouting activities in all three sections once we have the all clear from the Government and Scout Headquarters. Details about this will be distributed when appropriate.

Group Scout Leader

Many of you may know that our Group Scout Leader, Brian Gillman, has had health problems since the beginning of this year. Without going into the details, these have proved to be quite serious and Brian has felt unable to carry out his role in the way that he would wish. Consequently, he has resigned from the position of GSL. Fortunately, he has had an operation and is undergoing further treatment to improve things. He is now much better and the prognosis is very positive. Brian has been involved at the 18th since 1979 and as GSL since 1989 and the growth of the Group is very much down to the work that he has done over these past 40 or so years. At some point (when circumstances allow) we will have a celebration and thank you party for Brian, so watch out for the details of this. In the meantime, our Scout leader, David Matson has been appointed as Acting GSL by the District Commissioner. Bevan Blair, the Assistant Scout leader, will replace David as Scout Leader. Please give them the same support that you gave Brian and the Group will continue to thrive.

Thanks

The scouting side of the Group has again moved from strength to strength over the past year. All of our sections have had good years and all are thriving with no room for new children. All our leaders have continued to provide a wide range of activities for the children under particularly difficult circumstances, so I must thank Beaver leader Gary Tong, Cub leaders Ian Balboa and Rob Handworker and Scout leaders David Matson and Bevan Blair for all that they do.

The Beavers, Cubs, Scouts and the Executive Committee have continued to thrive. In the past year, the children have undertaken numerous activities, camps and visits. Details of these can be found in the section reports and on our website and Facebook pages and our Twitter feed. The Executive Committee, principally our Secretary, Jan Nicholls and Treasurer, Steve Ladle, continue to ensure the administrative and financial aspects of the Group are sound and can continue to support the activities that the Group provide for the children. My thanks to them and especially to all our section leaders and their assistants for all that they do for your children.

In my previous reports I have stated that our financial health is relatively sound and our accounts this year confirm that this continues to be the case. I have also pointed out that we continue to have running costs that must be funded from income, the main sources of which are subscriptions, camp fees and Gift Aid refunds from the taxman.

Thanks are also due to the parents who formed our social committee and organised a number of social events in the past year and are planning more for the future. Please keep an eye out for details of these which will be published in due course. These and other social events help us to keep our subscriptions at a relatively low level. Without them it is inevitable that we will have to increase subscriptions at some point in the future.

Supporting The Section Leaders

Like any Scout Group we always need help and support so I make no apology for repeating my appeal of previous years to everybody to think again about how you can contribute to the Group.

- Perhaps you can give more of your time to help at meetings.
- Perhaps you can help organise social/fundraising activities.

- Perhaps you can give a donation over and above the regular subscription.
- Perhaps you can provide practical help with the regular maintenance jobs in our headquarters.

I am sure that if you put your mind to it, there are many more ways that you can assist the Group and help to ensure that the 18th EFS can continue to provide fabulous activities for the children of Wanstead and Woodford for many years to come.

Remember that volunteers are the lifeblood of the Scouting movement and that we always need more!

HOWEVER, THIS YEAR!!

The above is my annual repeat plea for help and assistance, however, this year the need is much greater than ever before. The loss of Brian Gillman as GSL and perennial helper at all sections means that we have a serious problem in the Beaver section.

Our section leaders, David, Bevan, Ian, Rob and Gary have done an excellent job whilst we have been in lockdown and they are all actively involved in preparing for the new term. Having said that, we do not anticipate any major changes in the first instance, scouting is likely to continue activities remotely using digital technology. Whilst it is very difficult to predict exactly when face-to-face meetings can recommence we anticipate that this is likely to be sometime in October, possibly following the half term holiday. As and when this happens, the leaders will be looking for your help and support as always. Both the Scout and Cub sections have two uniformed leaders and will be ready to start when we are given the go-ahead.

However, at the moment the Beaver section only has Gary as a uniformed leader and no other support and assistance. This is clearly a significant concern and has been for quite some time. It has exercised the leaders and the members of the Executive Committee and was discussed at length at our recent meetings. Sadly, we concluded that without additional help we will be unable to re-open the Beaver section unless we have additional volunteers to support Gary. It is not legally safe to have only one adult looking after in excess of 20 children, even half this number requires more than one adult. In the past, Brian Gillman was able to help Gary run each Beaver session, but he is no longer able to do this and our new GSL, David, cannot be expected to help in the same way. To save the Beaver section we need a minimum of one person to be prepared to provide Gary with regular support. Ideally, and this applies to all three sections, the more support we have, the better we are able to provide scouting activities. Consequently, I am appealing to all parents and carers to step forward and help. I know from my own experience of helping in the dim and distant past that it is a very rewarding experience and is core to the way in which Scouting in the UK operates. On top of this, many of you will enjoy helping. If you are prepared to help in any way and with any section, but especially the Beavers, please let us know and we will be happy to discuss and explain what it involves.

I HAVE TO EMPHASISE THAT WITHOUT ADDITIONAL HELP AND SUPPORT, WE WILL HAVE TO CLOSE THE BEAVER SECTION. PLEASE DON'T LET THIS HAPPEN.

Finally

It just remains for me to acknowledge the efforts of everybody in the Group. As long as I have been Chairman of the 18th EFS, I have known that I could rely on our superb Leaders to continue providing a variety of fun, exciting and challenging activities for your children and on our very active Executive Committee to continue the essential administration of the Group. Without this knowledge my job would have been almost impossible.

All the Leaders and the members of the Executive Committee give generously of their time, skills and talents for the benefit of your children and on your behalf, I thank them for their efforts.

And, on behalf of the Leaders and the Executive, I plead with **YOU** to come and help.

Paul Plane

Chairman

18th Epping Forest South Scout Group

18th Epping Forest South Scout Group

GROUP SCOUT LEADER'S REPORT 2019/2020

The retirement of Brian as Group Scout Leader means that I have “big shoes to fill”, however I have had the advantage of following in his footsteps for the past 15 years as Scout Leader, so I hope to be able to continue to help run the Group in much the same way and with the same level of success.

One immediate change is that I have decided that I will not be standing in as a replacement leader for any of the sections. This means that we will need to find new Assistant Leaders for both Beavers and Scouts. For Beavers, the Group Executive has made it clear that the section will not reopen until an Assistant Leader is found to support Gary. I am pleased to see that we have had various expressions of support from parents and hopefully at least one will be the Assistant Leader that the section requires. This should enable Beavers to restart in October, probably on a different day of the week. Bevan is stepping up to lead Scouts, however we will in due course need to find a new Assistant Leader to support him.

As a passing observation, I note that we have a strong set of Leaders across the different sections however currently they are all male. This is unusual for a Scout Group and we would welcome (and benefit) from a having a female leader or two. This would also help us in our aim of encouraging more girls to move up through Beavers and Cubs to Scouts. Across the country, Scouting benefits immensely from the increasing proportion of Female Leaders and Young People.

The next challenge is to achieve the return of face to face Scouting in a safe and appropriate manner. All the sections are working on plans that will be submitted via the GSL and Chair of the Group Executive to the District for approval. The target dates to restart are Monday 21st September for Scouts and Wednesday 23rd September for cubs. For the reasons outlined above, Beavers will restart at a later date, hopefully in early October and probably on a different day of the week.

Currently the national guidelines allow maximum group sizes of up to 15 Young People to meet face to face, subject to approval of appropriate Risk Assessments. Two separate groups can be run concurrently outdoors to enable the whole section to meet at the same time however indoor meetings will need to be split into consecutive meetings with a break in between for cleaning. This would mean, for example, dividing Scouts in to two sub-sections: one from 7pm to 8pm and one from 8.15pm to 9.15pm. Currently, the national guidelines are that all Scouts must wear face masks indoors but that beavers and cubs (being under 11) are not required to wear masks. This policy would also apply to use of the minibus. Although we would take steps to minimise it, realistically the return to face to face meetings will mean an increase in close contact.

As part of the restart process, we would like to obtain feedback from parents and adult volunteers as to what is wanted and considered necessary. Please contact me or your Section Leader if you have any views that you want us to take into account. The leaders will need additional support from parents both to ensure that appropriate cleaning standards are maintained and to run an effective Track and Trace system. We are considering how best to address the issue and you can expect to hear more on the subject via OSM. This will probably require parents and guardians to commit to a Code of Conduct before their child can attend.

We know that these are difficult times for everyone and that we must prepare carefully to make sure we continue to move forward in a safe manner however it does look as if there is “light at the end of the tunnel”.

David Matson
Davidmmatson@aol.com
07951 458946

10th Epping Forest South Scout Group						303802	
Receipts and payments accounts							
For the period from		To					
Unrestricted funds		Restricted funds		Endowment funds		Total funds	Last year
to the nearest £		to the nearest £		to the nearest £		to the nearest £	to the nearest £
A1 Receipts							
Donations, Legacies & Grants	700	-	-	-	-	700	1,469
Fundraising Events	684	-	-	-	-	684	412
Hire of Hall	4,962	-	-	-	-	4,962	3,346
Interest on Deposit Account	67	-	-	1,840	-	2,007	1,359
Members Subscriptions	3,741	-	-	-	-	3,741	3,934
Sold Aid Robate	1,715	-	-	-	-	1,715	1,672
Camps & Outings	9,930	-	-	-	-	9,930	6,232
Sale of goods	769	-	-	-	-	769	711
Miscellaneous inc Solar PV generation	1,868	-	-	-	-	1,868	1,840
Sub total	24,086	-	-	1,840	-	26,026	20,997
A2 Asset and investment sales, etc.							
	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total receipts	24,086	-	-	1,840	-	26,026	20,997
B3 Payments							
O Repairs & Maintenance	784	-	-	-	-	784	982
Rates & Utilities (Electricity and Water)	2,427	-	-	-	-	2,427	1,954
Insurance	615	-	-	-	-	615	700
Miscellaneous Purchase and Running Costs	1,251	-	-	-	-	1,251	1,212
Fund Raising	151	-	-	-	-	151	20
Camps & Outings	9,891	-	-	-	-	9,891	8,156
Goods for Sale	1,024	-	-	-	-	1,024	647
Administration incl training	201	-	-	-	-	201	342
Equipment	1,903	-	-	-	-	1,903	766
Donations	50	-	-	-	-	50	466
Miscellaneous including Badges	506	-	-	-	-	506	1,058
Sub total	18,703	-	-	-	-	18,703	17,253
A4 Asset and investment purchases, etc.							
	-	-	-	1,940	-	1,940	1,318
Total payments	18,703	-	-	1,940	-	20,643	18,571
Net of receipts/payments	5,383	-	-	-	-	5,383	2,426
A5 Transfers between funds	3,000	3,000	-	-	-	-	-
A6 Cash funds last year end	12,839	21,000	-	-	-	33,839	31,383
Cash funds this year end	15,222	24,000	-	-	-	39,222	33,839

Section B Statement of Assets and Liabilities at the end of the period					
	Details	Unrestricted funds to nearest £	Restricted funds to nearest £	Endowment to nearest £	
B1 Cash funds	Cash	122	-	-	
	Current Account	2,897	-	-	
	Reserve Account	12,233	-	-	
	Total cash funds	15,222	24,000	-	
B2 Other monetary assets	Details	Unrestricted funds to nearest £	Restricted funds to nearest £	Endowment to nearest £	
	2019/20 Gift Aid Claim	1,624	-	-	
	Hampshire interest (due Sep 2020)	-	-	1,980	
		-	-	-	
B3 Investment assets	Details	Fund to which Endowment	Cost (optional)	Current value	
	Investment bond as of 1/4/20			100,893	
				-	
				-	
B4 Assets retained for the charity's own use	Details	Fund to which	Cost (optional)	Current value	
	Scout Hut (at 2009 valuation)	Unrestricted	-	250,000	
	Minibus	Unrestricted	-	8,000	
	Solar PV Panels	Unrestricted	10,447	1,044	
B5 Liabilities	Details	Fund to which	Amount due	When due	
	Payments for cancelled camp due to COVID-19	Unrestricted	320	01/09/2020	
			-	-	
			-	-	
Signed by one or two trustees on behalf of the		Firm Name		Date of approval	
		BRIAN GILLMAN			
		STEVE LAIDLIE			



Independent examiner's report on the accounts

Section A

Independent Examiner's Report

Report to the trustees/ members of	18 th Epping Forest South Scout Group		
On accounts for the year ended	31 March 2020	Charity no (if any)	303802
Set out on pages	1 & 2		
Respective responsibilities of trustees and examiner	<p>The charity's trustees are responsible for the preparation of the accounts. The charity's trustees consider that an audit is not required for this year under section 144 of the Charities Act 2011 (the Charities Act) and that an independent examination is needed. It is my responsibility to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• examine the accounts under section 145 of the Charities Act,• to follow the procedures laid down in the general Directions given by the Charity Commission (under section 145(5)(b) of the Charities Act, and• to state whether particular matters have come to my attention.		
Basis of independent examiner's statement	<p>My examination was carried out in accordance with general Directions given by the Charity Commission. An examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the charity and a comparison of the accounts presented with those records. It also includes consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts, and seeking explanations from the trustees concerning any such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in an audit, and consequently no opinion is given as to whether the accounts present a 'true and fair' view and the report is limited to those matters set out in the statement below.</p>		
Independent examiner's statement	<p>In connection with my examination, no matter has come to my attention</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. which gives me reasonable cause to believe that in, any material respect, the requirements:<ul style="list-style-type: none">• to keep accounting records in accordance with section 130 of the Charities Act; and• to prepare accounts which accord with the accounting records and comply with the accounting requirements of the Charities Acthave not been met; or2. to which, in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.		
Signed:			Date: 21 April 2020
Name:	Richard Aldridge		
Relevant professional qualification(s) or body (if any):	CA(SA) – Member of the South African Institute of Chartered Accountants		
Address:	31 Westlands Way		
	Oxted		
	Surrey RH8 0NB		

Notes to the Accounts

These accounts are prepared in accordance with the applicable accounting standards and the Statement of Recommended Practice (SORP).

Financially the group continues to be strong and as a result the Executive have again agreed that no increase in Subscription rates is required.

Overall income again exceeded expense for the seventh year running. Additional income was received from the Solar Panels (£1868) as well as use of the Minibus and letting out of the Hall for 3rd party use (£4602).

This year the interest from the Bond was again kept in the Bond rather than taking it into the working funds. This is something we review each year.

Income - significant points

A Membership Subscription Payment of £2,972 has been deducted from the £6,714 raised from subscriptions. The income shown in the Statement of Accounts (£3,741) is the net figure as the group act as collecting agents on behalf of the District Scout Council.

Tax Covenant Rebate - **£1,715** reflecting Gift Aid on subscriptions which are up on the previous year reflecting the continuing support from the vast majority of you who have agreed for us to collect Gift Aid on your behalf. The number of you who pay by Bank Transfer also continues to increase which is a great help to my workload. **My sincere thanks once again to all of you who have signed up to Gift Aid and/or pay by Bank Transfer.**

Income from Fund Raising Events was again slightly up. Camps and Outings income was higher reflecting a busy year for the Group.

Expenditure

Due to the healthy accounts position it was agreed to purchase a number of new tents. Utilities costs were again slightly up reflecting the increased use of the Hall from our rental activity and increases in the charges for electricity and water. Camps and Outings expenditure reflected the increased activity noted in the income section. A small sum was paid for camps due to be held around June 2020 which were cancelled due to COVID-19. This money will probably be transferred to any future camps.

Bonds

We have one Bond of £100,893 in addition to our normal reserves. We will be looking to reinvest some or all of the bond this year.

Minibus Fund

The Executive meeting in February 2020 again agreed to contribute to the Minibus fund as part of the Working Reserve with a transfer of £3000 for 2019-20. This fund is important to recognise that the Minibus will need to be replaced in the future the cost for which will be very significant. Due to planned changes in Environmental controls in Greater London it was agreed that replacement of the minibus may be required in the next couple of years.

Other

The use of GoCardless via OSM was introduced for the payment of camps and event costs for all sections as it gives the Leaders more information about who will be attending.

Steve Ladle

Group Treasurer

18th Epping Forest South Scout Group

Scouts Review 2019-2020

It was a year that was divided abruptly in to two parts by the imposition of lockdown on Monday 16th March. This led to the immediate cancellation of that evening's trip to Gilwell for fencing and archery and the end of all face to face meetings.

Pre Lockdown

In the autumn, the Scouts went to archery and climbing at Gilwell, and hiked from South Woodford to Chingford. We completed a modelling and war gaming activity that was provided for free by Warhammer. Most Scouts enjoyed this although a few decided it wasn't for them. The highlight was the camp at the Kingswood Centre at Overstrand in Norfolk. We took 18 Scouts and 3 leaders for weekend of caving, nightline, laser tag, obstacle courses, buggy building and team technology challenges.



At Christmas, the four oldest boys moved up to Explorers. Charlotte was promoted to Senior Patrol Leader and we were able to appoint 4 new Patrol Leaders and Assistant Patrol Leaders. I am pleased to report that they are all running their Patrols well.

The New Year saw us focusing on indoor activities. We started with chess and then designed our own Board Games. We brushed up our map reading skills and put them to the test with some Local Knowledge activities. The highlight for most was probably the Go-Karting at Edmonton. We managed one set of activities at Gilwell before the shutters came down just before we were due to go a second time.

Post Lockdown

Since Easter, we have run Scout meetings on line using Zoom Video Conferencing. Attendance has been strong, with numbers regularly exceeding 20 out of the 24 total. There are a couple of Scouts who haven't (yet) adjusted to the new world of zoom, but most Scouts are participating fully in all the activities. The Scout Leaders have also enjoyed running the meetings and we have decided to continue using Zoom's "Mute all participants" option when face to face meetings restart. We are now able to run activities that require more input and concentration from the Scouts. Although these activities do not replace all that Scouts can offer, it is not all bad.

First up, we started with a Patrol Quiz. This was essentially an online version of the activity we would have run at the Scout Hall. We then challenged the Scouts to Camp at Home on their own either indoors or outdoors. All Scouts and some leaders participated enthusiastically and reported back with photos or videos. We then ran an indoor scavenger hunt. We deliberately set a very large number of items to be found so the Scouts needed to co-ordinate in Patrols using WhatsApp Chat Groups.

After this we ran two double weeks of activities for the Chefs and Photographers Badges. Essentially the zoom meetings were "Show and Tell" opportunities for everyone to demonstrate what they had done earlier in the week. Hopefully all the parents enjoyed having at least one meal cooked for them. There was a vast range of meals, which reflected the full cultural variety of London. Some of the Scouts already looked well on their way to become competent Chefs. The Photographers Badge also brought out a variety of subject choices and enabled several of the Scouts to demonstrate their superior skills. Both these activities produced better results than when we had run them in previous years face to face.

By now, we had got in to the full swing of zoom meetings and so we attempted a couple of more ambitious activities online. First, we went on a Google Street View tour of central London. This proved to be a big success as the Scouts followed a route from South Woodford to Big Ben, Buckingham Palace, Trafalgar Square and Soho, then back home via Tottenham Court Road. On their way round, they had to answer questions based on what they could see on Street View. There were a few issues with different versions of Street View, but generally it worked well and was enjoyed by all.

We then set the Scouts an Escape Room Challenge. This required the Scouts to solve clues using Morse Code, Semaphore, grid references, map reading and observation skills. This was very successful. 20 Scouts completed the challenge and escaped the Scout Hut. We did leave 2 Scouts behind, but hopefully we will find them when we return to face to face meetings. We then spent a couple of weeks on Media Relations. First, each Scout made a short video to illustrate the "Stay Alert" policy and then a video of an airline safety demonstration updated for Covid. The results were funny and informative, demonstrating both skill and imagination. Several parents, brothers and sisters had starring roles so it was a great family affair.

We finished the term with another indoor Scavenger Hunt and an "Escape from Hogwarts" challenge. This proved to be great fun and tested the ingenuity of both Scouts and adults (well, at least the adults anyway). This was a program that had been written by Scout Leaders, shared on OSM and played over zoom. It was an excellent example of how Scouting under Covid can actually be better than the real thing.

We continue to follow national Scout guidelines regarding both the running of online meetings and the return of face to face meetings. Currently, we are planning to restart face to face meetings in the autumn. By then Bevan will be running Scouts as I am replacing Brian as Group Scout Leader. This means that we are now looking to find a new Assistant Scout Leader. Over the past 18 months since Bevan joined, we have seen how beneficial it is for the Scouts to have two full time leaders so I hope that we are successful in finding a parent who is willing to step up.

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CUBS' REPORT 2019/2020



Membership

Leaders

Ian (Baloo), Rob (Shere Khan) and Gary (Bagheera) continue as leaders this year. Rob and Ian are now sharing the leadership responsibilities, taking it in turn to lead the pack nights. We have also had help from Joseph Clarke, a young leader, who has just been given the Jungle Book name of Kaa.

Cubs

We currently have 26 Cubs. We have lost a few Cubs as a result of the lockdown, but generally numbers are stable.

Badges

Over the last year we have worked on the Road Safety, Chef, Scientist, Artist, Fire Safety, Gardener and various Skills and Hobbies badges. Several Cubs have completed their Chief Scout's Silver Award, which is the highest badge that a Cub can receive. Well done to them! We are now running a number of "Badges at Home" using a new feature of OSM to manage this.

Events

Highlights of 2019/2020

- London City Airport Trip
- Gilwell Fun Day
- Viking Camp at Gilwell Park
- Sixers & Seconders Camp at Thriftwood
- Family BBQ
- Quiz & Curry night for adults
- District Quiz
- Science Museum Sleepover
- Bag Packing in M&S for Haven House
- Pantomime – Rapunzel
- Chess Competition
- Go Karting
- Swimming Gala
- Archery & Air Rifle Competition
- Camp at Home

Cancelled Events

Unfortunately, due to the lockdown, a number of events had to be cancelled, and there are no current events in the pipeline. We hope to restart events sometime after the summer holidays.

- Group Camp
- St George's Day Parade
- Cubs' Day Out
- 6-a-side Football
- Sports Day
- Desert Island Camp

Zoom Meetings & The Great Indoors

We have been using Zoom to run online meetings for the Cubs during the lockdown. This has gone very well, and we usually have around 20 Cubs at each session. We have been working towards the Great Indoors badge, which has been designed by the Scouting movement to focus on activities that can be done at home.



Beaver Section Report 2019/2020

Since our last report, the Beavers have enjoyed a varied programme of events and regular meetings, which of course was somewhat cut short by the Covid-19 pandemic lockdown.

Beavers enjoyed a day of Bushcraft at Chigwell Row back in May, learning essential Scouting skills such as fire-starting and shelter-building, and finished the day off with some fun on the site's paddleboats.

A number of our Beavers joined the District Beaver outing to the RAF Air Museum Hendon, earning their Air Activities badges in the process. And we had a large turnout for the Gilwell Park Funday, the theme of which was Carnival, where the Beavers and Cubs took part in a wide range of activities on a sunny day at Gilwell Park.

We were very well represented at the District Sleepover at Chigwell Row as per usual, where the Beavers took part in a day of outdoor activities such as climbing, grass sledding, nightline and indoor caving. We also enjoyed two hikes in Wanstead Park, one of which we shared with Beavers from the 19th EFS.

We had a visit to a synagogue to learn about Judaism for our Faith badge, and the District Beaver Christmas party was very well attended. We attended the pantomime again this year along with the Cub section, to enjoy a performance of Rapunzel.

We also attended the District Beaver Challenge at the Rovsco Centre, a day of arts and crafts based on a theme of 'Japan'.

For a part of the last 12 months we were joined by Marielle, a Scouting leader from the Netherlands who was very happy to help run the Beaver meetings and events whilst she was living in London.

Sadly the lockdown led to the cancelling of a wonderful summer of events; 18th EFS Group Camp at Chigwell Row, District Activity Day at Thriftwood, Gilwell Funday, a visit from the Lego Builder and a Beaver trip to the Police Helicopter base in North Weald.

We have continued to keep Beaver meetings going using Zoom, but we are all looking forward to getting back to face-to-face Scouting as soon as it safe to do so.

During the period, we have had 11 Beavers gaining their Bronze Scout Award, the highest award a Beaver Scout can earn. Well done to all of them for their hard work and dedication.

Gary Tong

Beaver Section Leader

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