

3rd Epsom (St Martins) Scout Group

Minutes of AGM meeting held 17th September 2009

Present: Peter Clayton, Geoff Collins, Jane Clayton, Beverly Stevens, Debra Kaye, Richard Ascough, Peter Sitford, Ann Chapman, David Faulkner and a sizeable group of parents.

Apologies: Judith Sitford (had a baby earlier in the week), Jill Le-Jeune and Catherine Luff.

The chairman Peter Clayton welcomed everyone to the meeting. He commented on the success of the Group over the last year in terms of numbers of children and the variety of activities provided, and thanked the leaders for giving up their time to make it possible.

1. **Minutes of last meeting:** Agreed

2. **Matters Arising:** None

3. **Accounts:**

Jane Clayton presented the Scout Group's accounts.

The Income and Expenditure account statement for the year ending 31 March 2009 is attached. The statement has a separate column for Group, Scouts, Cubs and Beavers. The total income was 7,515.66, expenditure was 7,442.11. The excess of income over expenditure was 73.55 for the year.

4. **HQ Committee:**

Ann Chapman presented the HQ Committee's Report:

The year's income came entirely from hiring out the headquarters building, the principal users being the Ferndale Nursery and Epsom Players.

A major service of the warm air heating unit, together with the three gas water heaters, was carried out during the year. Minor maintenance work included repair of the hall lights and diffuser panels. The planned rewiring of the building and installation of new emergency lighting was undertaken at a cost of £5043 during the recent school holidays. This will appear in next year's accounts.

In preparation for the work done this summer, a working party of leaders and HQ committee members sorted the stores and other miscellaneous items in the loft, and constructed a new doorway between the two stores. In view of all this work, it was decided to defer decoration of the hall until later. These necessary payments have left us with no money at present for further projects.

A good way to get the decoration done is with working parties, but there are only five people on the HQ committee, so we really need parents to lend a hand for a few hours on one or two weekends a year. Sadly, there was no parental response to the previous working party letter. We will send further requests for help when the dates are set.

Thank you in anticipation.

5. **Section Reports:**

Beavers

Peter Sitford presented the Beaver Leader's report on Judith's behalf:

The number of Beavers has risen and we now have a full colony of 21, with an additional 3 children waiting to start now and more on the waiting list for the years to come.

The attendance at Church Parade has been fair, the Beavers took part in the Family service where they wrote and read out prayers. The beavers enjoyed the Bonfire and Sparkler evening at Headquarters. One of the highlights of the year was a trip to Bazzaz at Cranleigh Showground in June. There were stalls and a bouncy castle for the beavers to enjoy. Thanks to Peter, Hayley, Kathryn and Andy a leader friend from another county who helped transport wise. A fantastic day was had by all.

Badge work last term focussed on safety, and outings included a trail through Epsom Downs. Thanks to Otter. Other focuses over the year have been Cub craft and countries from around the world, work that will continue this year.

The focus of the programme this term is on discovery (weather). Thanks to all of the leaders Otter (Rita), Baghera (Geoff) and Panda (Kathryn) for running the sessions on Thursday evenings in Judith's absence. Also, thanks to the parent helpers for helping to run the sessions.

6. Cubs

Beverly Stevens presented the Cub Leader's report:

We currently have a Cub Pack of 17 boys and 1 girl. 4 have left since last summer, 3 to join Scouts (one is taking a break for his 11+ and hopes to join Scouts in January), and we are expecting a few more to come up from Beavers soon.

Cubs are still meeting in the HQ from 6:30 to 8:15 and being run by Akela and Feraro. Jacala has now gone off to university in Liverpool, and we will miss her, although she promised to come and visit us during her holidays. James Ascough has joined us as a young leader and we are looking forward to his help.

District events: The Cubs took part in the night hike last Autumn, and will be doing so again this year. They did well in the swimming gala which was postponed to January, and in the Cross Country in March this year. Four cubs passed the emergency aid badge earlier this year, and we attended the St George's day celebration at St Joseph's Church. We again had only an older team in the District Football competition in May, as unfortunately the younger Cubs did not want to take part. 11 Cubs attended the Cubcraft competition and came a very respectable 4th. This is an important event for Cubs to attend, as Packs are penalised if they have fewer Sixes represented than at Pack meetings. We also spend several weeks in the summer term teaching the Cubs the skills needed for the Cubcraft event. During the spring term the Cubs took part in a fundraising event for children with Leukaemia, and enjoyed making and flying their paper planes. Several Cubs gained their Athletes and Athletes Plus Badge in July. The Cubs also started their Fitness Challenge, and we gave them the summer holidays to complete their food and activity diaries and try different sports, and improve in one they already do regularly. Hopefully, they have done this. If not, it's not too late!

Our Summer Camp at Boidier Hurst was a great success, despite the weather which was wet at times. Our theme was Space and the Cubs various activities such as making black tie-dye banners for their Sixes, camp fires and cooking on an open fire despite the rain, swimming, and a night hike. Rama, one of the Scout leaders, set up a camp website, and as those of you who had Cubs and Scouts at camp will know, we sent messages home via the website this year instead of by postcard. We hope that you have enjoyed looking at the photos on the website - if you missed them, they are still available.

Cub activities: We are still planning to do outdoor activities this term. However, this is becoming increasingly difficult as the nights draw in. We have organised a Bat walk at Nower Wood next Thursday, and parents have hopefully received by email the information and instructions for this. If not, I have a few printed copies this evening. If not, we do need several parent helpers as the adult to child ratio is 1:6. Please let us know if you can stay and help. We also need to know if your child will be coming, so that we know how many Cubs to expect on the evening. We are also planning to help the Cubs gain their Cyclist

badge, and in two weeks time we will be meeting in Alexandra Park to check that they can ride safely. If any parents have any particular skills in cycle maintenance, please let us know if you can help. We have arranged for a blind lady to come and visit with her guide dog and this will form part of our senses theme leading to the Caring challenge this term. We are also hoping to have a bonfire evening with campfire stunts, a visit to the cinema, a team challenge evening, and will finish the term with a Christmas party.

Next year there is a County Cub event called SCRAM which is a day filled with lots of fun activities. We hope that many Cubs will wish to join in with this. More information at a later date - poster on the wall.

We would like to thank all of the parents who have volunteered during the past year, both at Cub meetings, District events and camp, and those who have already offered to help this term. It would be great to have more behind the scenes help with the Executive and HQ committees. If anyone else feels they could help, let us know how. This could be something as small as helping with refreshments or acting as a marshal at the Cross Country competition.

As most of you are aware, we are now sending out information by e-mail as this is more efficient in terms of letters getting lost on the way home, and also saves paper! Please let us know if you change your e-mail address, and check your inbox regularly for information about Cubs. We also have a website. As already mentioned, set up and maintained by Rama, where you can find the term's programme details, reply forms, and updates to events and activities.

Just to reiterate, those of us involved in running Scouts, Cubs and Beavers for the benefit of your children are also volunteers, and would really appreciate some assistance. Thank you for listening.

7. Scouts

Richard Ascough presented the Scout Leader's report:

In the last year we have continued with our usual set of busy activities in the Scouts. For the oldest section in the Group we try to undertake a variety of different meetings and go outside where possible.

In 2009 the Troop has fluctuated between 15 and 10 Scouts as a number of older children have left the Group due to age. We do have a slight problem with Scouts not being keen on going joining any of the Districts Explorer units. I think this is partially because there are no link activities and some of the Units are very large and daunting. This is something we will be raising with the District.

Following the summer holidays we currently have 13 Scouts with a few new boys having joined this September.

The Troop is still run by Wayne, Richard and Peter.

Following its refurbishment we are pleased to be able to meet once again in the Forge at the rear of the HQ. This allows us to undertake training type activities and we still have the luxury of using the HQ at the end of the evening for more boisterous games. We also plan our meeting around the Cubs so we make the most of the HQ when they are elsewhere, such as when we wish to cook.

Activities in the last year have included:

- Mountain Biking in the dark
- Cooking
- Knotting
- Swimming
- Pretending to be weather forecasters (and have our exploits on DVD)
- Wide Games

- First Response Badge (Stage 3)
- A hike across Epsom Common having travelled to Ashted by train
- Games in the Park
- Learning how to use Tilley and hurricane lights
- Orienteering in Gatton Park
- Ballista building
- Morris Dancing,
- a wide game in Horton Country Park
- and our Annual Chip Survey

For a period of the year we did have some issues with back chat from some of the Scouts. We have therefore drawn up a code of conduct with the Scouts to ensure that 'The Leaders and Scouts of the 3rd Epsom Scout Troop work together to promote good behaviour in the Troop whilst having a programme which is both challenging and fun.'

Breaking the code of conduct results in a warning. Scouts with two warnings on the same evening will receive a timeout and miss out on the next game/activity. Serious breaking of the code will result in an immediate timeout. Three timeouts in a half term and a Scout will have to miss the next week's meeting.

Since introducing the code the behaviour has improved.

We have struggled this year to enter teams into the various District Activities. With a small troop it is hard to pull together a Swimming or Football team. However we are hoping to take part in the next two District activities, The Tin Can Challenge and the Scout Quiz night.

In the last year the Scouts have been on 3 Camps.

In May this year we returned to the Upton Warren Sailing Centre near Droitwich to undertake a fun filled weekend of:

- Kayaking
- Sailing
- Canoeing
- Low Ropes
- Jacob's Ladder
- Caving/Tunnelling
- Raft Building
- And the Big Swing

All but one of the Scouts attended as we are very grateful to Phil Ascough, the head of the centre for giving up his time free of charge.

In the Summer we held a join camp with the Cubs at Boidier Hurst, our local site. This year we moved into the 21st Century with a blog being maintained throughout the camp to keep the parents informed of what we were doing. For the first time we also send emails home from the Cubs as opposed to postcards, and we put some early pictures of the Camp up on the Web.

Our last camp this year was in Kanderstag, Switzerland. 4 of our Scouts and 1 explorer joined 250 Scouts and Explorers from Surrey at the International Campsite setup by Baden Powell in 1923. Besides camping in the Swiss mountains activities includes Mountain walking, dry tobogganing, rafting for 22km, zip wires and abseiling 130m above a river and swimming in a glacial lake. The Scouts were a credit to the group and had a very good time.

For the rest of the year we have a number of activities planned including joint wide games with 1st Stoughton (whom we met in Kanderstag) and also with 3rd Stoneleigh. Ice Skating, Cooking and a Christmas meal.

Finally I would like to add that we are trying to reduce the amount of paperwork we hand out and also keep the Parents and Scouts better informed of our activities. Our web site now contains lots of up to date information including photos of our various camps and activities

(for all Sections), weekly programme information, district activities, location of badges and also links to the requirements for each of the badges. It has been well received and if you ever have a question or comment please contact one of the leaders by email or talk to us at the end of the weekly meeting.

Thank you

5. GSL Report:

Geoff Collins presented the Scout Leader's report:

Geoff thanked all the leaders for their hard work throughout the year, and also David Faulkner and Ann Chapman for their work keeping the HQ running.

He thanked Jane Clayton for her hard work as Treasurer of the group over the past years and presented her with a bouquet of flowers.

Geoff also congratulated Judith and Peter Sitford on the birth of their daughter.

6. Election of Officers:

- Peter Clayton was nominated to remain as Chairman
- Ria Stanton was elected to take over as Treasurer
- Debra Kaye was nominated to remain as Secretary
- Gillian Webbsmith was nominated as the Beaver parent representative
- Dawn Knight was nominated to be the Cub parent representative
- Jane Shaw was nominated to be the Scout parent representative

The appointment of an independent auditor was put on hold for the moment.

7. District Representative - no representative was able to make the meeting.

8. A.O.B:

- Parents were asked to look through the lost property to see whether there were any items belonging to their children.
- The next committee meeting will be held on the 1st December at Geoff Collins' house - an email will be sent out closer to the time with directions for the new committee members.

Peter Clayton closed the meeting and thanked everyone for attending. Cheese and wine were served to all the parents who attended.