

## **3<sup>rd</sup> Epsom (St Martin's) Scout Group AGM Minutes**

**1.30pm Saturday 20 September 2014**

### **Group Family Day, Boidierhurst Camp Site**

**Present:** Richard Ascough, Wayne Smith, Judith Sitford, Peter Sitford, Catherine Luff , David Steele, Caroline De Ville, Jo Danks, Guy Simpson, John Jordan (District Commissioner), Roxanne Bostock (County Commissioner), Geoff Collins and a number of parents from different sections in the Scout Group.

#### **Catherine Luff, Chair Person's Welcome**

Catherine Luff opened the AGM "Welcome our guests John Jordan (District Commissioner), Roxanne Bostock (County Commissioner), Geoff Collins (ex GSL), those from St Martin's Church and all those present. It is great to see so many of you here at Boidierhurst on our Group Family Day which is becoming a regular fixture in 3<sup>rd</sup> Epsom's Scouting calendar."

#### **Minutes of Last AGM 8 September 2013**

Minutes of the last AGM proposed by Guy Simpson, seconded by Calum Browne.

There were no matters arising.

#### **Beaver Leader's Report – Judith Sitford**

Over the past year, the numbers in Beavers have remained very healthy. We have had a steady stream of newcomers and have also been keeping the Cub pack full as the Beavers reach Cub age. The waiting list has numerous names on it...all to start over the next few years!

As I sit down to write this AGM report each year, I always worry we haven't done very many activities and haven't covered enough badge work. So I looked back at my reports that I gave to the Exec committee each term to remind myself...

In the autumn term, we worked on the Experiment badge where we had a carousel of experiments where children defied gravity, paralysed a finger and confused their brain! We had a visiting speaker who came to tell us about flying an aeroplane for our Air Activities. We also made helicopters. As part of our Creative Badge, we have made fruit salad and will be making Christmas decorations to finish off the badge. We have also finished a component of our Global Challenge badge left over from the previous Summer Term. We made a poppy wreath and held a minute's silence on the Thursday before Remembrance Day. Mrs Di Cicco came in and ran a sandwich making evening which was so well presented, and the Beavers were really engaged in making her sandwiches. Some of the Beavers attended the district event where they gained their Stage 1 Emergency badge.

In the Spring term badge work was focused on the Friendship Challenge. We learnt what to do in an emergency, learnt about people far away – Chinese New Year, where we tasted some Chinese food and made horses for The Year of the Horse. We wrote letters and started collecting together a parcel to send to a group in Cardiff to set up a link with them. Other badges included the Hobby badge and parts of the Adventure Badge

The Summer term started off with our Group's own St George's Day event here at Boidierhurst followed by fun and games. We had 13 join us at camp at Bentley Copse,

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Shere. The beavers loved camp, taking part in activities such as den building, camp chores, camp fire and the Mission Impossible tasks. They really didn't mind the constant rain, and loved sleeping over in 'The Nest'. Shortly after this event, some Beavers attended District Picnic in the Park at Nonsuch where the Beavers took part in various activities, including some water activities which worked well in the heat! Activities during our regular meetings this term included some acting where we treated the parents to an evening of campfire stunts, Celia Di Cicco returned to do some welsh rarebit muffins, the young leaders ran a quiz night, and we learnt what to pack in a rucksack for a day trip, and what to pack in a packed lunch/tea ready for later on in the term when we walked to Alexandra Park with our bags and enjoyed our packed tea. We visited St Martin's Church to have tour and we also invested one of the Beavers in the Lady Chapel – quite a special moment. I also awarded one of our Beavers with the Chief Scout Bronze Award.

So, I think we've had quite a successful year!

Warranted leader wise, we have myself, and when University terms allow, Kathryn – roughly 3 times this year! We have also had 3 young leaders over the past year at various times who have been invaluable. We have implemented a parent rota too and this seems to be working very well. As I have been running every aspect of Beavers by myself for a year, I decided to give a little plea to the parents to ask for more help. And was delighted when around 8 parents offered to help on a more regular basis and take on responsibility for record keeping. These parents are on separate rota, helping out more in the evening by running an activity or game. I cannot thank the parents who have already come forward enough for their offer of help. However, this number, for various reasons has been halved. I again plead for more parents to come on board! Especially as now I am expecting my second child and am now, more than ever needing to spread the work load. I shall leave it to Richard in his role as acting GSL to expand on this in his report.

Parental feedback

"The rota and information sent out in the last email is very useful, and clear about up and coming events.

The leaders give a LOT of their time and energy, which is much appreciated. The first aid training was excellent."

Suggestions for possible improvement were:

"It may be useful to let parents/Beavers know if someone other than Squirrel is running the evening. Many of us do know the Cubs/Scout leaders etc but many newer parents-and more importantly, the Beavers (who can be quite little!) do not."

"To consider... possibly instead of moving children up to scouts by age, move them by year group so friends can move up together rather than the youngest summer borns feeling left out when all their friends move up."

"Some more information about the badges would be good. How can we go about getting badges outside of beavers time? Is it online? What is the web site?"

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#### **Cub Leader's Report – Richard Ascough**

There has been quite a change at Cubs in the last year with the previous leader Gillian Webb Smith leaving in October. Faced with no leader Richard Ascough moved from the Scout Troop to run the pack supported by a regular team of 4 occasional helpers (Fiona Bravery, Jo Danks, Richard Price and Guy Simpson). In addition we instigated a parent rota which is working well.

Numbers in the Pack had dropped to 13. However since then the Pack has been very successful, rapidly growing over the autumn. Last year we peaked at 35 Cubs and for the first time we now have a waiting list, and that is even with 7 Cubs joining Scouts this September. What is also more encouraging is that the majority of those joining have come from outside the movement i.e. they have not previously experienced Scouting as a Beaver or Cub.

The programme has been varied undertaking a mixture of scouting skills, craft activities and badge work. In the autumn all the Cubs successfully completed their Emergency Aid Badge (first stage) and their Entertainers badge by taking part in a camp fire and making puppets for a number of puppet shows. They also undertook an evening of knotting and making Halloween lanterns. In the spring we went to Alexandra Park for a trail and also to complete the Astronomy Badge by looking at the stars and the moon through a telescope. Other meetings took place on the theme of the History of Scouting, the Jungle Book and Prayers. The Cubs made sugar mice and had a Christmas Party. During the Summer term the Cubs completed their Pioneering, Navigation and Map Reader badges. Other activities include a Treasure Hunt, Flags and Saints, a Games Evening and building 36 Hobby Horses for our own Epsom Derby.

On the District front we had 9 Cubs take part in the Night Hike to Boidierhurst in October. The Cubs entered 3 teams into the District Football Competition where one of the younger teams (under 9 and 3 months) were runners up. The Group were also very lucky to have an exclusive photograph taken with Bear Grylls, the Chief Scout. The Pack entered a team in the Swimming Gala and Ethan De Ville came first in the breast stroke with all the other Cubs reaching their respective finals. We had 8 Cubs enter the District bowling competition where the Pack came 6th (out of 10) with Sasha Jones getting the top girl score. 9 of our Cubs took part in the District Water day on the Thames and successfully gained their Water Activity Badge and Time on the Water Stage 1. We also enter all 5 of our sixes into the District Cub Scout Challenge (the biggest contingent from the District) where 2 of these sixes were placed 3rd overall. All 21 Cubs who entered were a credit to the Pack and their consistency meant that the Pack were placed 1st overall. A very successful and enjoyable day was had by all the Cubs.

Over May half term we had 21 Cubs camping at Bentley Copse in Shere for their Annual Camp. Based on the theme of spies, the Cubs did not let the extremely wet and muddy surroundings dampen their spirits and the Camp was very successful. The Cubs who attended all managed to gain their Camper and Outdoor Challenge badges.

I would like to thank Fiona, Jo, Guy and Richard for their help over the last year. Without them the Pack would most likely have folded. As you can see their commitment has resulted in a successful and happy Pack. Thank you.

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### Scout Leader's Report – Wayne Smith

Over the last year our Scout numbers have grown to 25 Scouts. We have had a number of Cubs join recently. We are still quite a young Troop with only one being over 13.

The Troop is still run by Wayne, Peter and Richard, but due to Richard running the Cubs, we have had to call upon the support of a number of parents. In particular Alan Spencer has given us great support on a number of occasions. We are very grateful for this. Ben Moody, has decided to stay on with the Troop as a Young Leader and we are pleased that Luke Giles still continues to help regularly also as a Young Leader. Our oldest Scout (Grace Knight) now holds the position of Senior Patrol Leader.

Throughout the year we have continued to provide an exciting programme for our Scouts. Activities have included:

- Several wide games
- Scouting basics (knotting, map and compass, first aid)
- A fair trade game in which the Scouts had to make 'training shoes', buying the equipment and materials whilst paying 'social charges' and selling the completed product
- Mini-pioneering, making ballistas out of lolly sticks
- Sewing (mobile phone pouches)
- The great egg drop challenge
- Night cycling across the Common
- Morris dancing, with a visit from the Ewell St Mary's Morris Men
- Mystery Christmas Treat Hike
- Internet safety and online bullying

We also made the Scouts do a short stand-up comedy routine to develop their personal skills

We took them to St Martins Church where they saw and rang the church bells, learnt hand-bell ringing and had a tour round and quiz about the Church

One group have been caving down the Merstham Mine with the Surrey Scout Caving Team. The other group go next week.

We had a number of Scouts complete the Swimmer Badge (including water safety), Chef's Badge and Camp Cook Badge, as well as Camper, Outdoor Challenge and Outdoor Challenge Plus badges.

A team from 3rd Epsom won the District Challenge Hike this year! We also put a team into the District Swimming Gala, getting into all the finals; winning one and coming second in the other.

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We took 7 of our Scouts, along with 3 from 1st Ruxley Troop, on the Surrey Scout trip to the International Scout Camp site in Kanderstag. Activities included low and high level walks, rafting, swimming, tobogganing and visiting chocolate and cheeses factories, as well as meeting Scouts from other countries and taking part in an International Campfire with over 600 Scouts. A fantastic time was had by all, with a number of badges earned throughout the camp.

We had a greatly enjoyed, if rather wet camp, in May camp, in addition to a weekend camp in April and Scoutabout, a terrific camp for 6000 Surrey Scouts and Guides, at which over 200 activities could be tried.

We are looking forward to another successful year of Scouting.

#### **Group Scout Leader's Report – Richard Ascough (acting GSL)**

Following last year's AGM where numbers in the Cubs had significantly declined it is pleasing to see the Group has significantly increased in numbers, growing in all sections. The programmes continue to be varied and exciting and the feedback received from the parents (both direct and indirect) is very pleasing.

However, whilst we have managed to recruit a number of parents to help run the Cub and Scout sections, there is concern at the lack of warranted leaders in the Group. At present there are only 4 (Wayne, Peter, Judith and Richard). Each meeting needs to have at least one warranted leader present and at least one other adult. A warranted leader is someone who has undertaken a number of training modules provided by the Scout Association. This training ensures that your children can undertake their Scouting in a safe environment.

From January, we are in serious danger of the Beaver Colony folding as Judith is pregnant and is likely to take at least 9 months leave from Scouting. Cover over the last year has been provided by Richard, who has at times run all 3 sections on the same evening. This however is no sustainable in the long term. We need to recruit a new warranted leader or leaders to prevent the section from folding during Judith's maternity leave. The Scout Association is now actively promoting job sharing and I would encourage a number of parents to consider if they could work together to run the Beaver meetings each week. The parents do not have to be Beaver parents. Parents who have children in other sections who feel they can keep Beavers going will be more than welcome. Help and support is available and if people work together it will not be very onerous. However, we need to get things moving and paperwork in place before January!

On a more positive note it is very pleasing to see the number of young children who attended May Camp at Bentley Copse. With 12 Beavers, 21 Cubs and 11 Scouts this is the most children we have had a camp for a long time. Despite the worst camping weather for more than 35 years, the feedback received showed that the camp was very successful. The torrential rain and deep mud did not dampen the camping spirit. This would not have been possible without the extended parent help we had at camp. Of the 12 adults who helped only 5 had previously camped with 3rd Epsom. Thank you for your support.

In our 92nd year the group continues to be success and I look forward to the forthcoming year where we deliver a varied and exciting programme for our Beavers, Cubs and Scouts.

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#### **Group Treasurer's Report – David Steele**

A copy of the 2 sets of the accounts were circulated: one for the hire of the hall and one for the scout group. The accounts have been independently audited and approved by DNA Accountants Limited.

David went through the accounts in detail.

The net worth for the Hall accounts was £13,796.69. Surplus of Income over Expenditure of £2648.99.

Key points about the hall accounts included:

- A major piece of work was done on the veranda at a cost of £1,300
- A new gas cooker was bought for £300
- All "Village" halls now require a music licence if they are to perform or play recorded music
- Some lettings have increased such as Ambition Dancing but others have reduced such as Epsom Players.
- Key points about the Scout Accounts included:-
- The overall Scout Income was £7553.82. The overall Scout Expenditure was £5499.86. Surplus of Income over Expenditure of £2053.96.
- Key points about the Income were as follows:-
- Group Levy is now £17 per person and covers activities such as organisation of Scout camp, purchasing of equipment, annual capitation fee and purchase of uniforms.
- Now the Scout Group is registered for Gift Aid so we are currently claiming back giftaid payments from previous tax years. By the end of this financial year we will be up to date on claiming back these payments.

Key points about that was raised was:-

- Capitation Fees is the £32.50 per Scout and Group leaders which goes to Scouting organisation.
- Equipment expenditure was the cost of camping spares such as billy cans, tea lights and gas boilers.

The total assets have increased from £6,679.79 in 2013 to £8,733.75 in 2014. This extra £2,000 has been reinvested in the Scout group through the purchase of new tents and other equipment.

The approval of the Treasurers report was proposed by Peter Sitford and seconded by Guy Simpson.

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Approval of accounts – proposer & seconder & show of hands for approval

#### **HQ Committee Report – Pete Danks**

Background - St Martin's church owns the land where the hall is, however the scout group own the actual building, and the Hall Committee manage the ongoing running and maintenance of it. Through hiring the hall out to third parties we raise sufficient revenue to fund the ongoing utility bills and maintenance costs.

During the last year the committee has reviewed the current hall users, the hours that they use it and the rates charged. Our regular users include Ferndale Nursery, Ambition Dance, Nam Yang and Epsom Players. The rates have been increased to ensure that both our fixed costs are covered and also to enable both ongoing reactive repairs and a proactive programme of works. The hall rates remain competitive compared to other halls in the area and ensures that the scouts and guides do not make any financial contribution towards the hall.

In the last year the following works have been undertaken: - car parking signs have been erected, notice boards put up for each section, the porch roof has been replaced, the oven has been replaced, smoke detectors have been installed, the old canoes have been removed and disposed of from the loft space in anticipation of electrical works, and 2 working parties have been held to clean up the external gardens & track and undertake numerous internal jobs.

Additionally, over the summer 3 major projects have been undertaken: - the external painting of the hall and the windows, the replacement of all the hall lights and their covers and the replacement of the fire doors.

The work completed in the last year has cost in excess of £10,000, however this has ensured the hall remains well maintained for all users. A proactive relationship with our hall hirers has been established where feedback and suggestions are requested to ensure they remain happy with the facilities that are provided, as without them the cost to the Scout Group and therefore us as parents would be significant.

Looking forward we plan to: - have the soak away and drains replaced at the back of the hall and the rear car park re stoned (which will be paid for through an insurance claim), replace the manhole in the main car park, and start to explore the total gutting and replacement of the kitchen units. We will also be moving our hall booking system on-line linked into our website to help both our users and us to track and monitor its usage and availability.

Feedback to the Hall Committee from anyone using the hall is always welcome, either via one of the leaders or directly to the chairman Paul Moody or one of the other Hall Committee members.

#### **Appointments and Elections**

As acting GSL, Richard Ascough nominated Catherine Luff as Group Chair person

The following changes were made to the rest of the committee, each approved by those present by a show of hands.

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- David Steele was re-appointed as Group Treasurer.
- Jo Danks stood down as Group Executive Committee Secretary
- Fiona Cowley stood down as Beaver Parent Representative
- Guy Simpson stood down as Cub Parent Representative
- Caroline De Ville elected as Group Executive Committee Secretary
- Susannah McNamara elected as Beaver Parent Representative
- Russ / Amanda Oliver elected as Cub Parent Representative

#### **Presentation of Awards**

Roxanne Bostock, County Commissioner, presented awards to recognise the service that individuals have put into Scouting.

- Peter Sitford was awarded the 10 year service award
- Richard Ascough was awarded both the 20 year and 25 year service award
- Judith Sitford was given the Chief Scout commendation for good service which recognises service above and beyond.
- Peter Sitford was also give the Chief Scout commendation for good service.

#### **Guest Speaker John Jordan, District Commissioner**

Thanks for the invitation. It is a pleasure to see so many young people and so many parents supporting youngsters and leading team. They really appreciate the support.

I received a phone call recently from Richard saying that 3<sup>rd</sup> Epsom are full up and that Judith is going on maternity leave in December. I have been told the youngest on the waiting list is now 10 months old. It must be something in the water. It has been a very successful year for cubs, scouts and beavers and it is really pleasing to see how much the group are taking part in group and district events. One or two groups in the district are very big and so tend to win lots of the competitions, but it is nice to see others winning and making it more of a level playing field. It is nice to hear the accounts and that although lots of work has occurred at 3rd Epsom, you are very solvent. There are a few grant opportunities around that are worth looking at closely, such as two recent grants worth £10K. If the group stated its case well, then there is money out there. Good luck to the group from the district. Thanks to the leadership team and hope you have an equally successful report next year.

#### **Any Other Business**

Richard Ascough thanked Graham Hetherington (Judith's father) who gave up time to do First Aid training for the group leaders and young leaders.

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### **Close of meeting**

Thank you all for your contributions not only to the AGM but indeed this past year of Scouting. I think you will all agree that the Leaders' enthusiasm, commitment and time volunteered to provide a wide variety of scouting activities, team spirit and fun, give all our children a fantastic opportunity to learn new skills at the same time as making friends and having opportunities to do activities not available in other clubs.

We are particularly grateful of the significant help provided by the parents and carers who assist in making the group so successful, we couldn't do it without you.

In the last year there have been some changes in terms of leaders, parent representatives and assistants with many parents becoming more involved with assisting in the running of the sessions and the Group. Thank you to those who have volunteered their time and to those who have been elected onto the Committee today.

We have further changes anticipated in the very near future particularly regards the Beaver Group.

We are always looking to recruit new members; our most pressing role is a Warranted Leader for the Beavers.

If anyone can spare a little time, not necessarily every week, it will be of great benefit to your children and aid the smooth running of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Epsom Scout Group.

Please do speak with any of us about the help and support you may be able to offer; we would be glad to find a role to suit you!