

1st P&P Post

No. 24
April 2016

A Word from the Chair

It feels like only a moment in time since the Christmas holidays but, scarily, it is now April! You can see from the rest of this issue of the Newsletter that a lot has gone on in the 'Spring Term', and I know that there is much planned to happen during the summer term. The summer term activity includes the Pang Valley District Mega Camp at the end of May and, so far, 89 young people from 1st P&P are booked to attend – but we can still take bookings if there are others who would like to attend but have not yet submitted their registration forms.

You will, I hope, know that the Group Executive Committee has, reluctantly, decided that we need to increase the monthly membership subscription to £9.50 per month from May, followed by a final increase to £10.50 per month from September. Subscriptions are payable termly (so 3 payments annually, each equivalent to 4 months) and we now collect them using our Online Scout Manager (OSM) system. We are also starting to use OSM to collect fees for camps, events, etc. Using OSM removes much administration from the Leaders so that they can devote almost all of their available time to worry about the programme rather than the paperwork. It also means that Gail, our Treasurer, can much more easily see the wood for the trees because the purpose for each payment received is more easily visible compared to the one line entry on the bank statement, or a handful of cheques or cash that need to be paid to the bank.

Finally, our Acting Group Scout Leader (Simon Pickett) is moving on to a new Scouting role and so is standing down. Our thanks to Simon for what he has done during the past year when he has been Acting Group Scout Leader. While we continue to search for a Group Scout Leader, we now have an Acting Group Scout Leader team, comprising Chris Hughes, Richard Goodyear, Suzanne Stout and myself. If you need to contact the Acting GSL at any time, the easiest way is to send an email to gsl@1stpandp.org.uk.

Have a great summer term!

Hamish Stout, Chair of the Group Executive Committee

Pang Valley District Chef Competition

Congratulations to all the Scouts who took part in the District Chef Competition. Planning, buying and cooking a three course meal on a budget of just £15, Scouts Joe, Olly and Jake impressed the judges with their menu of sweetcorn fritters, Thai green curry and a fried chocolate spread and marshmallow brioche sandwich. In fact their curry was so good that the judges asked for the recipe, so it was not surprising that they came home with the winners' trophies!

Joe said "We had fun. It was a great feeling that we did our best and it paid off. We improved from coming third last year to winning this year!" It was the second year of the competition and

the second year that a 1st P&P team has won. Well done boys - no pressure on next year's team then!



Pang Valley Cub Scouts Shere Khan Trophy

Well done to the 1st Purley and Pangbourne Cubs from both Packs who took part in the newly-revived Shere Khan Trophy in March. Teams of Heron and Kingfisher Cubs competed against Cubs from around the District in a range of challenges including tent pitching, fire lighting and problem solving. A great day was had by all, ending with a campfire. Very well done to the Kingfisher team who came second.



Kingfisher Cub Zachary said "I really enjoyed taking part in the Shere Khan trophy. Climbing across the peg wall was definitely one of my favourite bits. There was one activity where we had to find keys inside eggs and then unlock a treasure chest. That was fun but also challenging. The campfire was a nice way to end and I was pleased that our Pack came second."



BEAVERS

Water Voles Colony

2016 started with an evening on fitness organised by Bubbles. He put the Beavers through their paces with a workout and they assessed how it affected their heart rates. Their heart rates were then increased with an energetic run around Krazy Playdays when we met with the rest of the District to celebrate 30 years of Beaver Scouting. A fun evening was had by all, made extra special by birthday cake and party bags! Thanks to Martina Bottini who let so many Beavers invade.

More exercise was in order with a night walk around the village. The Beavers donned their hi-vis jackets and head torches and went out around the meadow on a letter scavenger hunt. They really enjoyed running around the field in the dark. Thank you to the parents who came along and supported the evening.

The second half of the term was related to starting their Safety badges. We had an evening on First Aid thanks to the St John's Ambulance who came along and taught the Beavers about what to do in an emergency. We have also had a visit from West Berkshire Road Safety team who talked to the Beavers about road safety, seatbelts and car seats.



We also enjoyed a visit from Charlie this term. Charlie was lucky enough to be a participant of Bear Grylls' Survival School and came along and told the Beavers all about his experiences. He showed them the kit he was given and talked to them about climbing waterfalls and warming your food using your own wee - yuck!

The term was concluded with an Easter / St Patrick's evening. We played games relating to either St Patrick or Easter - the Beavers particularly enjoyed trying to cross the "Giant's Causeway".



cubs

Kingfisher Pack

Kingfisher Pack started off the New Year with an excellent visit to the Thames Valley Police Museum in Sulhampstead. Among other things, the Cubs discussed stranger danger, tested their

We are looking forward to getting out more in the summer term when hopefully the weather will be drier and warmer. We are already looking forward to a trip to Dee Road Fire Station and a visit from the police to finish off our Safety badges.

Tic Tac (Colleen Hughes), Beaver Scout Leader

Polecats Colony

The Polecats Colony started off the term welcoming our new Beaver Scouts with some getting to know you games and activities including making friendship sticks. The following week we learned about our founder, Robert Baden Powell and the history of Scouting and decorated biscuits in celebration of 30 years of Beaver Scouting. We celebrated properly a couple of weeks later when we joined other Colonies from across the District for a fantastic party at Krazy Playdays.

We were celebrating again on Burns night: as well as learning about Robert Burns and listening to some of his poetry, the Beavers enjoyed some bagpipe music, made shortbread and tasted haggis, which they mostly seemed to like. Very few Beavers were brave enough to taste swede ("neeps"), however, they much preferred to use the swedes for a game of bowling! The delicacies were washed down with that traditional Scottish drink, Imbru.

We had yet more food and fun on Pancake Day, and decorated tealights for our mums in the run up to Mothers Day. On "leap day" (February 29th!) the Beavers went to do a bit of leaping at Reading climbing wall, which counted as an adventurous activity towards the new Adventure Challenge badge. All the Beavers had several goes and some made it right to the top of the wall!



After a games night and a night learning about animals and their habitats, we finished off the term with a lovely evening walk from St Mary's Church up to the Barn, keeping an eye out for items to spot on the way. A huge thank you to all the parents who came along to help out.

Sunshine (Fran Jones), Assistant Beaver Scout Leader

observational skills and got to sit in a police car. Meanwhile, one of the Leaders ended up in handcuffs....!

The Kingfisher Cubs also worked on their domestic skills this term, practising shoe polishing and scarf ironing, changing a light bulb and laying the table. We also spent evenings making pancakes, recycling waste to make musical instruments, and investigating electricity and renewable energy. In March we entered a team in the Shere Khan Challenge Trophy, earning a

well-deserved second place.



Kingfisher Cubs started on two big programme initiatives this term: #youshape Scouting, where the Cubs help choose the direction of our programme, and #amillionhands where we define and run a community impact programme. After taking part in a range of activities exploring mental health, disability, dementia and drinking water availability the Cubs chose to focus on helping people with disabilities learn, live and work independently. Leading on from this, the Cubs carried out an accessibility survey in Pangbourne, and followed it up with letters to companies including GWR and the Working Men's Club. More activities will follow in the coming months.

Akela (Matt Shakespeare), Cub Scout Leader

Heron Pack

The Heron Cub Pack welcomed Ed, Josh and Evie to the Pack this term. After a meeting spent in preparation, the Cubs enjoyed

a night hike from Sulham to Calcot, culminating in the investiture of new Sectional Assistant Mowgli (Davey Meredith).



The Cubs also worked on their domestic skills this term, sewing on badges, ironing scarves and polishing brass and school shoes. When our neighbourhood warden Wendy came to visit, they learnt all about how to keep Purley a nice place to live in. They also had an opportunity to progress with their swimming badges, thanks to a District-organised testing session. Towards the end of term, a team of Cubs from the Pack took part in the District Shere Khan trophy and had a great day competing against other Cubs to complete the challenges.

Recently, the Cubs have started working on fundraising ideas, aiming to take action in our community and we finished off the term with a fun movie night.

Akela (Gareth Evans), Cub Scout Leader



SCOUTS

Friday Night Troop



The Friday night Troop have enjoyed some fun evenings this term. They started back with bagpipes and biscuits to celebrate Burns night. Later on in the term, competitive tower building ended up as all out cup-war. The last night of the term was spent protecting Easter eggs to ensure they could survive a fall from the balcony and playing a game of human hungry hippos using Easter eggs instead of balls!

Graham Green, Scout Leader

Monday Night Troop

Early on this term we focused on first aid, practising resuscitation skills and staging some scenarios using some of our new Scouts as "victims"! We also started to look at #youshape Scouting, and spent an evening focusing on domestic tasks, where the Scouts continued to improve their ironing, sewing and sawing skills. The Scouts also hiked through the woods from the Barn to Pangbourne in the dark, which was lots of fun.

In preparation for the District Chef Competition, which 1st P&P won last year, we held an eliminator evening to select our two top teams. As this happened to fall on Burns night, potential teams were asked to cook "mince and tatties" to the best of their ability. The results were varied, but we selected two teams, one of which went on to win the competition.

In the run up to the Three Towers hiking competition in April, we

spent an evening working on navigational skills, using vegetables to demonstrate how to navigate using contour lines! We have also held two practice hikes for the competition and invested three new Scouts during the first one. We are very proud that we have a record number (for our Troop) of 4 teams entering the competition this year and hope that they won't end up walking quite as many "extra" miles as they did during their practices!



To end the term we spent a fantastic evening at Reading Climbing Centre. Lots of Scouts managed to climb some very high walls and great fun was had by all.



Usually by Easter we have held our first camp of the year, but Easter was so early that it wasn't possible this year. We are looking forward to the start of the camping season and to lots more outdoor activities in the term ahead.

Jez Jones, Scout Leader



EXPLORERS[✿]



The spring term saw our Explorers take part in a number of events as part of a concerted effort to integrate Units from across Pang Valley. In February, we joined a special dinner at Cosmo, with 111 uniformed young people and Leaders.

In mid-March we attended the first ever District Explorer Film evening, which acted as the culmination of several movie-related evenings. We started with a half term movie night to watch 'Everest' and followed that up with an evening filming our own entries for the District event. The remake of Lord of the Rings (Put a Ring on It) beat half a dozen other entries to take the win in Reduced Classics, while our short Vine clip took the honours (admittedly by default) in that category. We received numerous positive comments about our Unit entries but the double win was

certainly unexpected!

Explorer Scouts builds on the skills developed in the younger Sections of Scouting, with Unit members encouraged to develop and lead their own programme ideas. We had two evenings last term run by Louis and Liam on the theme of global warming. We also used #youshape week to run a Cool Wall to identify what our Unit enjoys – and doesn't – about Explorer Scouting.

We have most recently held our second annual Marathon Camp to support the Group by helping to run the water station at Reading Half Marathon – and at the time of writing were planning to invest our latest Explorers into the Unit.



It's an exciting time for the Unit. We're looking forward to the lighter spring / summer evenings so we can venture out of the barn for some of the activities that really epitomise what Explorers is about. We are also starting to offer The Duke of Edinburgh's Award through the Unit, which will further strengthen the programme we can offer to all Explorers.

Chris Hughes, Explorer Scout Leader