

1st P&P Post

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A Word from the Chair

What a fantastically busy summer term the Group has had! So much going on in the various weekly meetings and augmented by District Mega Camp, and other events/activities enjoyed by all of the Sections.



Our role on the Executive is threefold. (1) We are (in law) the Charity Trustees of the charity that is 1st Purley and Pangbourne Scout Group. (2) We need to make sure that the Group's finances and resources are in good order to fully support the work of each of our Beaver, Cub, Scout and Explorer Sections. (3) We need to simplify 'administration' so that the Leaders and other adults working with each Section spend their time delivering programme and not collecting money and keeping lists of who is attending which event.

For (1), we have a well-run charity, but we would like you to come and verify that for yourselves at the Group's Annual General Meeting which will be on Friday 16th September. More details later, but please keep the evening free in your diary.

For (2), we believe that we offer really good value for money in each of our Sections and hope that you will agree with that, even though we have recently had to increase our membership fees following this year's budgeting.

For (3), we are increasingly exploiting Online Scout Manager (OSM). There have been a small number of hiccoughs with that as we have learnt how best to use the system, but in the main it is working well. Some parents have still chosen to pay with cheque or cash, which is absolutely fine, but in 2016 there have been almost 500 payments through OSM that Leaders would otherwise have had to collate and pass to Gail Jugg (our Treasurer) for banking, so that is a significant time saving. If you do think there has been an OSM problem, please let me know quickly (chair@1stpandp.org.uk) and we will sort the issue – we want to save on admin, not cause any consternation!

Finally, we hope that you have a great summer and come back fully refreshed for the autumn term in September. If you are unsure, you can find the term start date for your Section in the

Group Calendar which can be reached through the Group website (www.1stpandp.org.uk) or the 1st P&P Facebook group.

Pang Valley Mega Camp

A fabulous sunny bank holiday weekend saw 97 of our young people - Beavers, Cubs, Scouts and Explorers all camping together and joining several hundred others from Pang Valley at the District 'Mega Camp'!

Packed full of activities, there was hardly a minute to spare from the Opening Ceremony on the Friday evening to the Closing Ceremony on the Sunday afternoon. In between, the Saturday was divided into four 'zones'; The Active Zone including climbing, shooting, archery, and cooking and the Team Zone with mop hockey, large inflatable ball, and other team games. To give a balance, there was the Craft Zone which included branding, key ring making, and catapults and then the Community Zone which had visitors from the RSPB, Shelterbox, Guide Dogs for the Blind, My Life Films (looking at Dementia) and our own Leaders looking at Fairtrade and WaterAid.

For the Saturday evening there was a Barn dance followed on Sunday with a May Fair including traditional sideshows and candy floss, to a tug of war and five a side football competitions to name but a few things – we even managed to win a few trophies in the competitions!



Our young people had an amazing time. Some of the things they had to say about their weekend included:

- "I had a mega awesome time" – George
- "It was my first camp and it was epic" – Evie
- "It was amazing meeting new Cubs" – Charlie
- "It was the best camp ever" – Elyssa
- "There were air rifles and I got a BULLSEYE" - Will
- "It was exhilaratingly fun" – Madeline
- "It was mega bonkers" – Krists
- "I have done 6 or so camps and this was the best" – Zac
- "Climbing was awesome" – Frankie

To sum it up, a busy but fun weekend and our thanks to the Leaders that gave up their weekend to make this a great experience for those who were there!

Suzanne Stout, Acting GSL team

BEAVERS

Water Voles Colony

Water Voles having been having lots of fun over the summer term. We have welcomed and invested 3 new Beaver Scouts into the Colony and they are settling in well.

We started back after Easter with an evening on knots and magnets. The Beavers enjoyed tying reef knots with strawberry laces and REALLY enjoyed eating their knots afterwards! We also discussed what badges they could achieve and set ourselves challenges for our personal challenge awards; it has been great seeing the Beaver Scouts rolling their own neckers and learning how to tie their shoelaces. We also presented 2 Chief Scout Bronze Awards to Kian and Oliver - well done boys

We were thrilled to be invited by Kian's dad to visit Dee Road fire station. The Beaver Scouts were even lucky enough to see the fire crew get called out on a shout. Much excitement was had when all the alarms went off. This was nicely followed by Kian's dad abseiling down the fire tower. Thank you Mark for having us.



We have also been working on our camp skills this term. The Water Voles have been putting up tents and cooking s'mores on the campfire. The Beaver Scouts made some amazing camp pictures using nature; buttercups for the campfire flames was my personal favourite. This was followed by 9 of our Beaver Scouts attending

District Mega Camp with 5 of them sleeping over for the first time on their own a huge achievement for them all.

Inspired by camp, we had a nerf gun evening where the Beaver Scouts took aim at various different targets. We have also been looking at the Olympics: making torches and mardi gras masks, seeing how many different languages we can say hello in and making Eiffel towers using spaghetti and marshmallows. Before the summer holidays we are looking forward to the District

Beaver picnic at Englefield and a visit from the River and Canal Trust to finish our Safety Badges.

Tic Tac (Colleen Hughes), Beaver Scout Leader

Polecats Colony

The summer term has been lots of fun and it's not over yet! We started off by celebrating the patron saint of Scouting – St. George. The Beavers made swords and shields and some fantastic dragons (from cutout hands!) that stretched the length of the hall!

For the next couple of weeks we concentrated on some community service, doing litter picking in the playground and around the playing field. We also learned just how long it takes for some of our rubbish to decompose... and the Beavers made some great posters warning of the dangers of dropping litter. The Beavers also used recycled rubbish to invent their own machines for getting rid of rubbish!

Many of the Beavers have completed their experiment badge this term. First they made "lava lamps", then they spent an evening investigating magnetism, making clocks powered by potatoes and lemons and planting cress seeds to take home and find out how they grew differently in the light and in the dark.

The week before Mega Camp we had some (rather messy!) fun creating our 1st P&P scarecrow, which attended the camp alongside

seventeen of our Beavers. The Beavers thoroughly enjoyed camping and twelve nights away were gained.

Inspired by the camp, we spent an evening putting up tents and doing some pioneering as part of the camp craft badge. The Beavers had lots of fun working out how to carry a cup full of water using just three garden canes and a lot of elastic bands! We are hoping that lots more Beavers will join us for Group Camp in September.



We have just a few weeks left now, but will be packing in a picnic, a walk and, hopefully, a visitor before the end of term.

Sunshine (Fran Jones), Assistant Beaver Scout Leader



cubs

"Best Trip Ever"

1st P&P Cubs from both Packs recently enjoyed an amazing visit to The New Forest Aqua Park, followed by an overnight stay at

the Museum of Army Flying at Middle Wallop, "camping" under the suspended planes! The trip was a huge success, as you can see from what some of the Cubs had to say:

"I liked climbing up the giant slide and sliding down into the water" – Ben

"I liked the water park because I like getting wet and bouncing

on things” – Louise

“My favourite bit was when I was laughing uncontrollably in the tent – camping indoors was fun” - May



Kingfisher Pack

Kingfisher Pack have had a busy term with plenty of outdoor activities. Early on in the term the Cubs spent an evening orienteering and clearing the garden, ready for the planting season. Leeks were rediscovered, weeds removed and beans planted. It paid off later in the term when every Cub was sent home with a leek!

Following our disability access survey of Pangbourne railway station last term (#millionhands), we were delighted to receive a large bundle of individual responses to the letters that the Cubs had written. An excellent evening was spent building and racing sedan chairs, with teddy bears as the perfect passengers! Another excellent evening was spent fire lighting and back woods cooking: super noodles followed by s'mores – yum!

To celebrate 100 years of Cub Scouts, the Cubs held 100 m races, built houses of 100 cards, a tower of 100 matches and challenged themselves to 100 catches in a row! They also celebrated the Queen's 90th birthday with 90 true and false facts about Her Majesty. The Cubs have also learned about staying safe on the water, railway and internet, and have learned about democracy, with a debate and election on the EU referendum.



Kingfisher Cubs also took part in the District Shere Khan trophy and Mega Camp and, most recently, had an amazing weekend

away at The New Forest Aqua Park and Museum of Army Flying. *Akela (Matt Shakespeare), Cub Scout Leader*

Heron Pack

Heron Pack have had an exciting term, despite the rain preventing some of our planned outdoor activities. We started off with a visit from Wendy, one of the Neighbourhood Wardens who talked about her role and the importance of throwing away your litter in the right place. The Cubs also had a visit from two of the dogs from the Berkshire Search and Rescue Dogs. The dogs were amazing and managed to find Mowgli and several Cubs who got 'lost' on the field. Father Nicholas also visited and spoke to the Cubs about the church and the role of a vicar, giving the Cubs a chance to dress up in some of his cassocks!

At the beginning of May the Cubs worked hard organising a fund raising event for Berkshire SAR Dogs. They planned and set up their own stalls and invited parents to come and take part. In total they raised an outstanding £122. On 14th May it was the annual Springbok Challenge, where Cub Packs from across the District took part in various sporting events, such as tug-of-war, knot relays etc. Kristis, Max, Angus, Zac and Frankie came 2nd, which was a huge achievement as most other Packs had double the number of Cubs on their team. As a well done, Mowgli presented them all with a silver medal.



Our trip to the Calcot Porsche Garage was a big hit with all the Cubs who attended. We were made to feel very welcome and the Cubs had a chance to sit in all the cars. We also invested several of our Cubs in front of a rather shiny yellow Porsche. The Queen's Birthday was celebrated with a traditional tea party, complete with Cub made bunting and handmade cucumber sandwiches, scones and cream and of course a cup of tea. The parents came to join in the celebrations and finished off with a rousing rendition of God Save the Queen. Den building in Sulham woods was great fun. The Cubs built their dens and sat in them. To test their water resistance, we poured water over them to check the effectiveness. Unfortunately, most of the Cubs came home a little damp, but happy.

Last weekend, 11 of our Cubs enjoyed the New Forest trip; thank you to Akela (Matt Shakespeare) from Kingfisher Pack for organising. Before the end of term, the Cubs will hopefully be completing their Athletes Badge (weather depending), celebrating American Independence Day and going on the annual Purley to Pangbourne Chip Walk.

Akela (Gareth Evans), Cub Scout Leader

SCOUTS

Friday Night Troop

Friday Troop have made the most of the light evenings and (slightly?) better weather by getting outdoors as much as possible. We have played wide games on the Recreation Ground, built trebuchets on the Meadow, and made paper boats to test on the River Pang. The Scouts also got out onto the water themselves, going canoeing for an evening which everyone thoroughly enjoyed! And at half term, several Scouts from the Troop had a great weekend at the District Mega Camp.

This term has seen changes in the Leadership Team, with Alex moving to experience a different age group, and Liam turning 18 and becoming a Sectional Assistant with Heron Cubs. This has meant that Graham has been running the Troop of 30+ Scouts on his own (with support from other Leaders on the Friday evenings) and this, as I am sure you will appreciate, has been hard work. (Especially when you consider he is also planning for his forthcoming nuptials!) However, the good news is that from the September term, we hope to have a new 'team' in place being headed up by Graham. So thank you for your patience and understanding this term and watch this (exciting!) space!

Friday Scout Leader Team

Monday Night Troop

At last – long summer days! Best time of year for Scouting in the evening! We have packed a lot in since Easter, starting with 4 teams entering the Three Towers hike competition. Our fastest team got close to the Scout Group's fastest ever time; maybe they will break it next year! We held our Patrol Camp a little later this year, at Paddicks Patch, with 17 Scouts attending; lots of skills and knowledge gained, and many wooden pallets burnt!



Many of the Troop enjoyed themselves at Mega Camp, and we then had a shortened "summer" camp this year, to Danemede Scout camp in Hertfordshire, mostly camping indoors, which was great and a bit different. The camp included a trip to the Lea Valley white water course, built for the Olympics 4 years ago, and the 23 Scouts had an amazing, if not slightly terrifying, time on the water! But they also had great fun just jumping over a stream of tea coloured water in the woods!

Our Monday nights have been busy too, with this term's program chosen by the PLs and APLs and including a bike ride, DIY mini

golf, kayaking at AD (session run by an old member of the Troop!), Scout Sports, and a couple of wide games.

Running Scouts is great – full of opportunities, with a chance to take part in all of the activities that Scouts love. Most of us are just Scouts at heart! We could really do with a few more adults to join the 1st P&P Leader family, so we can keep providing a program full of adventure, and help all our members get the most out of their time in this very rewarding Section. There is loads of training and support available, and it is great fun!

Do feel free to get in touch, or come along on a Monday night and see what we're getting up to. *Jez Jones, Scout Leader*

EXPLORERS



It's been a term of arrivals and departures at Explorers. Since Easter, we have invested Luke, Lucy, Debs and Alex, but have also bid farewell to Louis and Liam. We're delighted that both will be staying part of 1st P&P in Leadership roles – and adding to our increasing numbers at Network. The Unit is also saying goodbye to Hannah at the end of this term, as she turns 18.

This term is always more relaxed, with school commitments and exams rightly requiring extra attention from the Explorers. We've still had a fantastic turnout on Thursday evenings, and lots of support for other Group events, for which we are thankful.

The longer evenings have allowed us to do more outside the barn – including a "Getting on Our Nerfs" evening, and a visit from the Reading Ultimate Frisbee team. By special request, we ran an evening dedicated to Sean, and more recently held a Euro-themed session involving human table football!

Our support of District Mega Camp was not without its perks. We arranged for soon-to-be UK Chief Commissioner Tim Kidd to present Louis and Becky with their hard-earned Chief Scout's Platinum Awards while they were giving him a tour of the camp.

We're planning to work towards more Awards in the coming year as we ramp up our Duke of Edinburgh activities and continue to add to our Unit numbers. We have a raft of new Young Leaders and a lot more activities in the pipeline. At time of writing, we are preparing for the annual trip to Gilwell 24 and our traditional end-of-term Cosmo's evening. Hard to believe it's that time again already. Have a good summer everyone!

Chris Hughes, Explorer Scout Leader