

Annual report for Mendlesham Annual Parish Meeting

April 2023

Scouting Activities

We have all been really pleased that we have been able to provide a full programme for all our sections the past 12 months.

Our numbers have been increasing year on year and now have 40 young members in Beavers, Cubs, Scouts and Explorers. We do have vacancies in all the sections, especially Explorers where we only have 4 members. We operate a District Waiting List, which is mainly Beavers.

We are currently short of Leaders. We have vacancies in each section which we are desperate to fill, however, all our current Leaders are doing an amazing job.

Our Leaders have been able to provide a very diverse and interesting programme enabling our young members to gain 'Skills For Life', which all sections having a say in what they would like to do each week, the Leaders just put 'the meat on the bones'.

During the Autumn and Spring terms, we use the Community Centre, however, during the Summer term, we use our HQ at the Green, where we erected a large party tent, which was donated to us, where we were able to do many more outside activities.

The Group organised a St Georges Day meeting at the HQ and also attended St Mary's church for Remembrance Day.

The Beavers have been completing the Air Activity badge, Animal Friend badge, Space badge plus other badges, along with making S'mores, making Christmas craft, soft archery and a Halloween event. They also visited Stonham Barns on a District Fun Day.

The Cubs have been completing several Challenge badges including Our World and Our Skills, plus several Activity badges like Scientist and the Athletes badge. The Cubs have also experienced Sumo Wrestling, backwoods cooking, Chinese New Year, Blind Food Tasting, making special safe catapults and Christmas Tree decorations.

Several of the Cubs participated in the recent Mendlesham Litter Pick.

The Scouts have also been very busy, involving Parliament Week, working on the allotment, a Ready Steady Cook session, Warhammer modelling, Christmas Wreath making and a bike hike from Gislingham to Haughley Park for a weekend of survival skills. Some of the Scouts participated in the recent Gislingham Litter Pick. They also entered a team for the District Lightweight Hike and ended a respectable 8th out of 15 teams.

Six of the Scouts recently visited RAF Wattisham to experience Scuba Diving.

The Explorers meet most Thursday at the HQ all year round. They have participated in some of the District Explorer events, like the Baked Bin Tin Challenge. They also attended the Scuba Diving with all 4 Explorers involved.

Camping

We have now resumed camping activities and the Beavers and Cubs joined the District at an activity weekend at Hallowtrees Activity Centre.

Five of our Scouts joined 1st/3rd Stowmarket at the County Suffolk Punch camp in August (yes, when we had that really hot weather). The Beavers and Cubs attended for an Activity Day.

We held our Group Camp at Eaton Vale, Norwich which was a weekend of fun and activities.

The Scouts and Explorers recently attend the District Frostbite Camp (February) at Haughley Park, where they built their own shelters to sleep in and prepared and cooked fresh mackerel.

Awards

We have had several awards made over the past 12 months:

One Beaver achieved the Chief Scout Bronze Award, one Cub the Chief Scout Silver Award with one Scout the Chief Scout Gold Award.

Leeann Steed, our Assistant Scout Leader received her 15 year Long Service Award and a Commissioners Commendation for her Fundraising by making wreaths all year round and donating the profit to St Nicholas Hospice and to the Scout Group.

Martyn Bryant, the Group Scout Leader, received his 25 year Long Service Award.

Jonathan Freeman, Explorer Leader received his 10 year Long Service Award.

Chris Freeman, Assistant Explorer Leader, received his 5 year Long Service Award.

Scout Hut Project

We continue to explore funding opportunities to move our scout hut rebuild forward. Whilst there are many smaller funding pots available, these do not allow for the much-needed capital funding to enable us to proceed with getting an actual building in place.

Once we have an actual building in place then we can apply for these smaller funders to enable us to complete interior works, such as fitting kitchens and toilets and so on.

Lack of capital funding is a national problem at this time, with much funding in recent years being diverted originally towards Covid, Covid recovery and now, cost of living crisis.

As with everything, the price of building materials has increased massively, which has drastically increased our project costs. We are therefore looking at alternative building options to those originally costed, to reduce project costs and lower the amount of funding required.

Having water and electricity reinstated at the scout field has been really helpful in running our activities here during the summer months. We are currently looking to install some underground drainage in the next month or so, which is required by building regulations to ensure that our planning permission does not expire.

We have been working with the Parish Council to secure our lease of the scout field. Once we have this, we will be able to apply to larger, capital funding streams if and when they become available.

As a scout group we continue to fundraise through our own events such as the recent quiz night, as well as running our burger stall at other local events, such as Little Stonham village Fete & Bacton fete last year.