

Chairman's Report for AGM 23rd April 2010

The theme for the past year has been consolidation – getting used to the routine of planning and running two Beaver and two Cub evenings each week, getting used to a much larger Scout Troop and settling into the new stores and workroom. These are ongoing tasks and probably will be for some time.

The focus of this year is our centenary. This year 1st Sunningdale is one hundred years old: for one hundred years people have thought that what this scout group does is valuable and worth making that extra effort for.

As a scout group we are educating, challenging, entertaining and developing slightly over one hundred children (118), which is roughly half the size of one of our local schools. With more children wanting to join this makes this group one of the largest local community organisations in the area after the churches and schools. That is something we should all be proud of.

Centenary

One hundred years ago, almost to the day, in March 1910, the first Scout Leader and the first Scouts started Scouting here in Sunningdale. This Scout Group has been going continuously since then with several of you here having been actively involved in running the group during that time. It is a testament to the principles of Scouting that so many children and so many adults have wanted to be actively involved for so long.

To commemorate those who have already been involved in 1st Sunningdale, those who are currently involved, and those who will be involved we have planted a centenary memorial oak tree in the Sunningdale Recreation Ground, by the playground to give shade and shelter to the children in and around the playground. Hopefully this tree will outlive us all and be a constant reminder of all those who have been involved with 1st Sunningdale.

Sections

The section leaders and our Group Scout Leader will give you all the details but let me just say that in the last year 1st Sunningdale have put on and participated in an enormous range of activities, had some great camps and done extremely well in district competitions and events. The Christmas panto was a huge, sell-out success.

This Scout Group, like any Scout Group, happens because our volunteer leaders (and their families) go out of their way to make it happen. It is the leaders' planning, preparation and leadership of the children that makes Beavers, Cubs and Scouts exciting and memorable. Without the leaders, there would be no Scout Group and this Group, in particular, would not be as popular as it is.

There have been a few changes to the leaders in the last year but, on behalf of everyone, particularly the children and all their parents, I would like to say a really, really big thank you to all of the leaders. It is all your thought, imagination, effort, planning and organisation that makes all the evening meetings, special events, competitions and camps go so smoothly and be so enjoyable. The children get a real buzz and excitement from what they do in Scouting – you can see it in the way they arrive at each event and the noise they can make when they're there! Thank you very, very much for all of that.

Adult help & involvement

The more children there are in the Group, the more effort it takes to make sure that all the proper records are kept, subs are collected and all the activity materials are bought or made and organised. Doing all this in lots of thirty or fifty takes effort but that effort is least and involvement is most enjoyable when the work is spread widest.

Helping out with activities for Beavers, or Camps for Cubs and Scouts really helps the leaders and the children and in some cases can make all the difference between an event happening or not. Thank you to all of you who have volunteered to help when needed. Your efforts have been much appreciated.

Several people are helping with administration: Valerie Lees runs Beaver finances, Alison Grieve runs the waiting list and Lynne Ringshaw and Vanessa Crook help collect Cub subs. Thank you very much to all of you for all the work you do helping to keep the sections running smoothly.

In part because of the centenary this year, but mainly so everyone associated with the group could just have a good time, we formed a Social Fundraising Subcommittee last year and I would like to thank all the subcommittee members – Vanessa, Lynne, Cheryl and Vikki – for the great work they have done and are doing, and the fabulous events they have organised. So far the Centenary Tree planting and the St Patrick's curry have been fantastic successes and we're all really looking forward to the Centenary Ball at the Berystede Hotel on 26th June.

Waiting Lists

The waiting lists have been climbing steadily over the past year and overall numbers are now, roughly, back to where they were before starting the second Beaver and Cub nights. There is a big difference though: there are now no age-eligible children waiting to join Beavers who can't join because of lack of space. There are, however, children waiting to join Cubs (6) and Scouts (5) who can't because of lack of space. There are twenty-six children on the Beaver waiting list.

The youngest person on the waiting lists is two years old.

New Stores, Workroom and Maintenance

The new stores have proved very comfortable and effective to use: all the group's major equipment is now under lock and key, in one place and dry (where necessary). The wiring of both the stores and the workroom is now complete so we are ready to finish fitting out the workroom. We have already had some very generous donations towards the workroom but it will need more and we will need volunteers to do the fitting out.

Now that we have almost finished the replacement of the old stores it is time to turn our attention back toward the main building. This will need some work over the coming year – some paint will need refreshing and the roof and the drains will need to be cleared. None of these are big jobs if there are many hands to help, and they need to be done.

Continuity

As a local voluntary organisation we depend on our own resourcefulness and our community to keep going. We have to organise ourselves. No one else will do it for us. Each of us will, at some point, move on and when we do the organisation we are in needs to keep going. To keep our organisation going we each need to keep an eye out for the people who might replace us and, whatever role we are in, we are probably the best judges of the people most suitable and likely to take over from us. For the sake of everyone in the Group please keep this in mind.

Fundraising

Most of our fundraising comes through Jumble Sales and the Sunningdale Area Carnival. These are also community events and are great fun. We have, again, had some very successful jumble sales this year and, with the bike stall alongside the tombola, the carnival has also been a great success. We need to do the same over this next year but we also need to continue to extend our fundraising to cover new activities.

Thank you

There are some people who work hard in the background who keep us all alert and on our toes who I would like to thank. Jennifer Adams will be stepping down as Group Secretary and Geoff Streeter will be stepping down as Group Treasurer. Both of them have done a huge amount for the Group over the years and we are very, very grateful for all their work and guidance. Geoff Adams will continue as Group President and we are very glad to have his invaluable advice and assistance. Our parent committee members – Vanessa, Lynne, Pablo, Nigel and Richard – have been a great help in committee and, in particular, Vanessa, Lynne and Pablo have been a huge help in organising and helping in administration and at fundraising events. Thank you all of you for the time, thought and effort you have given.

Thank you, all of you who are here, for taking the time and making the effort to be here.

Julian Crofton
Group Chairman
22nd April, 2010