

HEMEL HEMPSTEAD DISTRICT SCOUTS

MINUTES OF THE DISTRICT TEAM / GSL MEETING held at Hobbs Hill Wood Primary School on Tuesday 23rd April 2013

PRESENT:

Russ Dyble (DC)	Andy Glass	Jan Maddern
Geoff Angell	Bruce Gregory	Karen Moxom
Clive Borgeat	Steve Harris	Sheila Neep
Keith Emerton	Richard Haynes	Mick Reeve
Simon Fancourt	Richard Hirons	Mike Watson
Suzanne Ford	Linda Jermy	David Woodall
Myra Foster-Edwards	John Larkin	

APOLOGIES:

Keith Gower	Chris Patmore	Robert Salt
Frank Monnington	Colin Rivett	

Russ welcomed everyone to the meeting, his first as District Commissioner. After introductions, Russ presented some service certificates.

1. DC UPDATE

Over the past 7 weeks, Russ had met with the majority of GSLs, Contacts and Chairs, as well as neighbouring DCs and others. Russ had found this an interesting process and expressed his gratitude to everyone who had made time to meet with him since his appointment in early March. Russ summarised points raised as follows:

- Most felt the District was working very much in a silo mentality but showed a willingness to change this and be more open to working with others again.
- Many felt the “two-groups” rule had been counter-productive and want this reviewed (but recognised some of the reasoning behind it). This will be dealt with on an event by event basis.
- Many felt that the district programme should offer young people the chance to try new activities and perhaps where it didn't require the whole troop to participate. Smaller groups with fewer leaders could be supported by larger groups to help this.
- Many felt the District could (and should) have a better relationship with Phasels Wood. Doug Stack had indicated his wish to support scouting as much as possible.
- Many felt that there were improvements to be made in the relationship between Scouts and Explorers but most felt this was a two-way process. A review of HHEX will be carried out by a group of 5 people together with the Explorer leadership team during the Summer term.
- Many felt that the District offering fundraising which groups benefitted from would be useful and would create a win-win situation.
- Many felt that the leaders meetings were not focussed enough on meeting together as sections, rather too much input was given at the beginning which was not always relevant. Russ outlined his proposed format for future meetings.
- Many felt that the provision of adult training was not inspiring and needed changing to make it more straightforward to access and that some trainers needed to change. A new system (a training train) will be trialled in conjunction with 5 other Districts.

- Some felt that some of our events are repeated too often and should perhaps be run every two years (or four in the scout section). The frequency of events will be looked at to make sure the programme stays fresh, and to ensure events/skills are built on section by section.
- Some felt that information comes out too late or is pulled together hurriedly, with no prior warning that it's coming. It is proposed to carry out more forward planning to enable YP/parents to choose/plan participation and finances in advance.
- Some felt that there was a generation of talent potentially being missed that we must encourage Young Leaders to learn from those who have many years of experience.
- Some groups (often those with smaller leadership teams) felt a pressure to commit to events when their leadership team wasn't comfortable they could do so.
- Some felt "over-supported" by the number of District events, some of which they felt were better delivered in their sections or in partnership with one or two other groups.
- Few felt "social events" were useful but felt events such as the quiz night or similar would bring people together but crucially get the support because there was a purpose.
- Feedback from leaders in some groups was quite different from that given by the GSL/Contact, especially in terms of how involved they felt they were in the District, the usefulness of the appointment review process and the overall direction of the group.
- Russ has analysed the census results for the past 5 years and has identified some interesting/worrying/encouraging trends across the District. This will be discussed with the District Exec and the ADC Development / ADC Group Support will work with groups to address / capitalise on these.

Russ went on to outline some of the proposed ways to address these issues, including the structure of the district team and appointments to these roles:

District Team Appointments:

Rachel Woods and **Paul Rathbone** have stepped down due to their availability – both will continue to support the District as members of the Scout Active Support Unit.

Geoff Angell will step down as District Scout Network Leader from the end of August.

Andy Glass has taken on the role of Deputy DC – with responsibility for Beavers, Cubs and Scouts. His task is to recruit a team for these sections (ideally an ADC and District leaders). Each section may vary depending on requirements and individual skills.

Karen Moxom has taken on the role of ADC (General Duties) – she will have responsibility for co-ordinating and chasing actions agreed at meetings, managing a team of people to support internal and external communication within the District, fundraising events and other projects.

All other vacancies are on hold until after Russ has completed meeting with each GSL/Chair in order to establish needs. Below is an outline of the vacancies likely to be advertised across the district during May:

- **ADC Group Support** – providing support to Group Scout Leaders in managing and developing their groups and providing support for groups who don't have a GSL in place (this support will vary from group to group).
- **ADC Adult Support** – supporting new adults, particularly through the first 6 months, encouraging the sharing of ideas and inter-group working. Talent-spotting and encouraging "new faces" to get involved in new/existing projects.
- **ADC Development** – a nominated person to support new sections/groups starting up.
- **ADC Activities** – promoting the introduction of new activities (particularly adventurous activities) into the District and group programmes. Facilitating training for adults to achieve permits and taster sessions to inspire young people.
- **Scout Active Support Manager (event support)** – to co-ordinate a team of flexible volunteers who want to support district/group events without making a regular commitment to a section meeting.

- **Explorer Scout Leader (Young Leaders)** – the exact scope of this role will depend on the review of Explorer Scouts / Network during the Summer term.
- **District Scout Network Leader** – the exact scope of this role will depend on the review of Explorer Scouts / Network during the Summer term.
- **Membership Enquiries Co-ordinator** – to receive enquiries, pass them to groups and ensure follow-up happens. Contacting back after 6 weeks to see whether they have joined and if not, why.

There will also be an opportunity for all leaders and parents to indicate whether they would like to get involved with specific tasks (such as fundraising, communications), projects (such as large events, Jamboree support etc) and activity training/permits.

Role of the District Team:

The role of the District team is to support these areas:

Programme

- Provide good quality, well-organised activities which complement the programmes run by sections – ideally by people who are not section leaders but this is sometimes the most appropriate way, taking into account skills and availability.
- Support leaders learn new skills and/or put them in touch with others with those skills to enhance the programme.
- Facilitate inter-group discussion so that each section / leadership team receives the support which they need.

Development

- Identify opportunities to grow Scouting and support groups to take advantage of these opportunities.
- Ensure local communities and community leaders are aware of Scouting, the impact we have and the support we require to continue to operate effectively.
- Nurture our leaders of the future (young leaders and young adults) – giving them opportunities to take responsibility and to learn from these experiences.

Recruitment

- Take a lead on youth recruitment in targeted areas.
- Support groups to recruit parents as leaders by creating opportunities for parents to experience leadership (primarily through events structured in certain ways).
- Provide resources to support groups to highlight volunteer opportunities to the parents of their current members and the local community

Funding

- To put into place arrangements which support groups – for one-off projects and ongoing.
- Investing in the areas above to improve Scouting to ensure we recruit new members and retain those we already have (especially adults).

District Executive – DCs Nominations:

Russ commented that the Executive is strong and covers a variety of issues during the year. One improvement to be made is the four DC nominees each having a “portfolio” for which they are responsible. To make this work they may convene a sub-committee or work with individuals already in roles across the District:

- **Business & Finance (TBC)** – annual budget, event budgets, fundraising, event subsidies, loans to groups, partnership agreements etc
- **Development (Colin Rivett)** – ensuring that development projects undertaken across the District fit into an overall plan and are resources/supported properly. This will encompass making things better, as well opening new sections/groups.
- **People (Jo Hiron)** – appointments committee, adult training, appointment reviews.
- **Community relations (Jan Maddern)** – promoting Scouting externally, through events and local media outlets. Establishing links with individuals and organisations who can support groups/the District to achieve our aims.

Paperwork was distributed to groups outlining the process for individuals wanting to stand for election at the district AGM. These should be distributed to all leaders and parents.

2. FORTHCOMING DISTRICT EVENTS AND ISSUES

St George’s Day – 28th April - 200 YP had signed up so far. The timetable has been issued and the A41 car park should be used. Ideally one leader from each group would arrive by 1.00 p.m. ready to greet the YP/parents in the meeting place. There will be a short parade, presentations and renewal of promises. This will be followed by an afternoon of activities, some with particular relevance to the history of scouting and the meaning of the promise etc.

Awards Celebration Event – 13th May – invitations have gone out to YP who have gained their Gold Chief Scout Award and DofE awards. There will be a presentation to the Mayor, Bert Chapman, with thanks for being the President for the past year.

District AGM – 21st May – nomination letters were going out, the deadline is 7th May. The format of the meeting was outlined; there will be a slideshow and a short formal business meeting, followed by refreshments. Explorers would be demonstrating some scouting skills. Andy asked for any photos or videos that could be included; Sheila requested to be advised of numbers for catering by 14th May.

Brightlingsea Sailing Week – Russ will contact Phil McLachlan for further details.

Beaver Sports – 1st June – there is now not enough time to make arrangements; a revised date will be identified.

On Yer Bike Sponsored Cycle Event – 7th July – Richard Haynes outlined details of the County Event and the plan to run a District event alongside. Further details will be circulated nearer the time.

Cooking & Campfire Evening – 10th July – letters will be available by half term for distribution to YP the first week of June. Simon gave details of planned bases and asked for volunteers to run them.

Nimrod Challenge – 13th July – Frank will be requested to issue all details by 3rd June.

Holland Expedition – 1st-10th August – there are 115 participants, all arrangements are in hand. A training camp will be taking place 11th/12th May.

AquaSplash – despite repeated attempts, contact with the relevant person to make a booking had not been possible. This event will now not take place during Summer term, but will be discussed further at the planning meeting in July.

Kayak Expedition – the second date (cancelled due to bad weather) had yet to be rescheduled. David Woodall has taken on co-ordination of this, and gave a brief update. David also outlined 1st Apsley group's plans to set up group activity support for kayaking on the day lake next to their HQ. There are now enough adults with permits to take out 40 YP. There are plans to develop this activity, working with HH Canoe Club and Phasels.

3. GROUP UPDATES

1st Hemel Hempstead – will be holding a Race Night on 11th May.

4th Boxmoor – this year is their 50th anniversary, they will be holding a reunion in September. The annual family camp will be at Phasels Wood in June, old members will be invited back and the group AGM will be on the Saturday evening of the camp. A second Beaver colony has been opened.

1st Warners End – will be holding a family camp. Bruce will be departing at the end of the Summer term; Russ thanked Bruce for his leadership of the group for many years.

1st Bennetts End – will be carrying out some upgrades to their hall. A family camp will be organised.

7th Hemel Hempstead – still a young group, finding its feet; Lockers Park school holidays caused difficulties for the group to participate in District events.

3rd Boxmoor – 100 years old this year. A celebration will be held in September.

4th Hemel Hempstead – all going well, have a couple of new leaders and a good programme in place for the next term.

1st Leverstock Green – Group camp will take place during May half term. The Tuesday evening CSL is stepping down and a replacement is being recruited.

1st Gadebridge – a group executive has been formed. The Beaver and Cub sections are open thanks to the efforts of Simon Fancourt, Kerry Sayers and Keith Gower since September 2012.

SECTION MATTERS

Beavers – a leader meeting will take place on 2nd May.

Cubs – a leader meeting had taken place with 15 attendees. The visit to Duxford and the London Outing had both been successful. A two year plan for events such as the sixer/seconder day will be discussed at the next meeting on 7th May.

Scouts – leaders will be invited to a meeting on 9th May (invites to be issued by 26th April).

HHEX – the third unit is slowly increasing its membership, it still needs a name. The DofE trip over Easter weekend had to be changed to a training weekend because of bad weather. A date will be fixed for the Scout taster session for this term; discussion will be held with groups on when is the most appropriate time for their YP to move up.

Network – Chiltern Challenge '13 had been very successful. The current programme includes a County Network meeting once a month to look at Queen's Scout Award, etc. It is a quiet time as many members are at university, but they will be back in June so activity should increase.

4. DISTRICT TEAM MATTERS

Adult training – training to be held on 2nd May will now be at 1st Warners End. A safeguarding session has been arranged (8th June at HHW) aimed at leaders in their 4th year of appointment. Completion of safeguarding training is mandatory in order for appointments to be renewed (GSLs will be kept aware of details by Steve Harris).

Presenters will be needed for the training train, anyone interested should speak with Steve. All CRBs are up to date (we are one of few districts who can say this – others are having to suspend adults whose disclosures have expired).

Nights Away – no report. Simon commented some of his group permits had run out. Russ will ask the Appointments Committee to be more proactive in identifying what is coming up. Permits (and their expiry dates are and will continue to be listed in the district directory).

Water Activities – bookings for BLYM sailing should now be online, this will be checked.

SAS – nothing to report.

Scout Shop – Linda requested groups to advise her if they are aware of a large number of YP doing any particular badge as this would help her be ready with stock levels. A shop promotional leaflet is available for groups to distribute.

County Lottery – being run in support of the County Capital Appeal (which now stands at c£0.5m); new design forms were issued to groups. HHDS is on target to raise £10K towards the appeal. Discussion with County on profit-share is ongoing.

Membership record system – Groups were asked to check the form provided by Mike regarding how they record membership details, in readiness for submission to County. Russ outlined the process in hand regarding the new database.

5. FORWARD PLANNING

County Cub Night Hike – Richard Haynes was again organising; it is hoped to find someone to work alongside Russ this year in coordinating the bases with a view to taking over that role in the future.

Jamboree selection weekend – 26th/27th October – Russ briefly outlined the selection and allocation processes (based on split across districts of 12, 13, 14 and 15 year olds recorded on the 2013 annual census).

St George's Day 2014 – this will be discussed at the next meeting, but groups were requested to put the last weekend in April 2014 into their diaries.

Lochearnhead 2014 – 14 YP (from 1st Apsley) and 16 leaders have already expressed their interest; other groups will be promoting this event over the next few months. The promotion/application process will be similar to that for Holland, i.e. commencing September with a 1-year lead in.

6. FUTURE MEETINGS

In view of the comments on dates proposed; the following are the revised dates for future District meetings for GSLs, Group Contacts, Group Chairs and the District team.

Date	Forthcoming Events – details	Forward Planning - outline	Main Topic(s) for Discussion
23rd April	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> St. George's Day Awards Celebration Event District AGM Beaver Scouts Sports Day 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> On Yer Bike Campfire Cooking Evening Nimrod Challenge Holland expedition Lochearnhead 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> District team arrangements Feedback from Group meetings and annual census Priorities for the coming years
18th June	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> On Yer Bike Campfire Cooking Evening Nimrod Challenge Holland expedition Lochearnhead 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bushcraft (2013/14) Jamboree selection process CCNH 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> New adult training format Adult awards Relationship with Phasels
5th September (All Sections Meeting at Phasels)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bushcraft (2013/14) Jamboree selection process 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Green Beret bases St. George's Day 2014 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> New activities for 2014 Final details for youth recruitment campaign
3rd October	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Green Beret bases 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sixer and Seconder Challenge Beaver Xmas Party 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> District budget for 2014 Fundraising (for groups, district and capital appeal) Development projects for 2014 Membership enquiry process
14th November	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sixer and Seconder Challenge Beaver Xmas Party 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Spring 2014 activities St. George's Day 2014 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Training provision for those reaching appointment review Jamboree support group
4 th Feb 14	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Spring 2014 activities St. George's Day 2014 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community Week Summer 2014 activities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Census arrangements
22 nd April	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community Week Summer 2014 activities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Autumn 2014 activities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Feedback from Group meetings and annual census