

# **ANNUAL REPORT of 1st MERTON PARK SCOUT GROUP**

**For the year 1 January to 31 December 2016**

Registered Charity no 267800 Scout Association no 35274

## **Chairman's Foreword**

One definition is that Scouting is a movement that aims to support young people in their physical, mental and spiritual development, that they may play constructive roles in society, with a strong focus on the outdoors and survival skills.

But Scouting means different things to different people. What does Scouting mean to you and what does it mean to your child? Does Scouting provide a means of alternative education that supports and enhances school or is it just some fun, or hopefully both?

1st Merton Park Scout Group has a long tradition of developing young people and of involvement in the community. The past year has seen this continue, with membership increasing in all sections and a long waiting list for our Beaver section. This does not happen by chance and is the result of a huge effort from numerous volunteers. These include the "uniformed" section (Beaver, Cubs, Scouts & Explorers) leaders who plan the weekly sessions and then execute them with the help of able and willing parent helpers. At no point was this more evident during 2016 than in the Beavers section where, as a result of the leader having to step down and a lack of parent support, we were at one point considering moving to fortnightly meetings, with the distinct possibility of the section closing down. A "request for help" was put out by the Group executive and I am delighted to say that this call was answered by a number of parents who are now actively involved in the Beavers section. This response was a fantastic demonstration of how valued the Group's activities are by both children and parents alike.

Behind the scenes there is the Group Executive, who oversee the operations of the Group, including ensuring that the Group remains financially viable.

These are all unpaid volunteers, and I would like to publicly thank each and every one of them for their efforts over the past year. They give up their free time to help continue the legacy that has been created by previous generations of volunteers, thus ensuring that the 1st Merton Group can continue to play an active role in developing young people within the community.

As you will see from the section reports, 2016 was another busy year for all sections of the Group, with lots of fun being had by all. In addition, the traditional twice yearly jumble sales have helped to ensure that the Group remains in a financially strong position. However, despite this and the continued strong membership of the Group, 2016 was not a year without problems. In particular I would note the withdrawal from active service of our Group Scout Leader (GSL), Ray Donovan-Hill, during 2016. Ray has been at the heart of the Group for many years, initially as the leader of the Beavers section, but more recently as the GSL. Sadly, due to poor health, Ray had to step down from his position of GSL during 2016, leaving a large void that still needs to be filled. On behalf of everyone involved with 1st Merton Scout Group, I would like to personally thank Ray for the huge contribution he has made to the Group over the past decade. Ray remains involved on the Group Executive and we wish him well in his battle to return to good health.

In the meantime, we remain without a GSL. This is something which the Group Executive are very mindful of, since this is not a position that is tenable in the medium term. We therefore continue to actively search for a replacement GSL.

Finally I would like to thank all those present at the AGM for taking the time to come along this evening and being a part of the 1st Merton Park Scout Group. If, as I do, you believe that Scouting is worthwhile we should all support it as best we can. Please support your Scout Group and speak to a leader about how you may be able to help enrich the lives of our young people here in Merton Park.

Thank you for your continued support.

**Matt Saker** – Chairman

(Signed) MATT SAKER.

MINUTES OF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING HELD IN  
STANLEY LODGE ON WEDNESDAY 23 March 2016

1. Welcome

The Group Chairman Andrew Grimme welcomed those present and introduced the top table: Ray Donovan-Hill (Group Scout Leader), Chris Rowlands (Acting Secretary) and John Garrett (Treasurer).

Present were Kathy Di Franco, Alison Reynolds (Beaver Scout Leader), Mark Renton, Joe Rogerson (District Commissioner), Matt Saker, Martin Whiting (Deputy County Commissioner). Some leaders were running section meetings and so could not attend.

2. Apologies

Apologies were received from Glenn McMurray, Vicky and Clive Tullett, Marco Di Franco (Independent Examiner), and the Revd John Hayward; but he visited after he had taken a Holy Week Service.

3. Minutes of the AGM held on 25 March 2015

The minutes of last year's Annual General Meeting were approved and signed by the Chair.

4. Annual reports and accounts

Group Scout Leader's Report

Ray thanked Joe Rogerson for attending and congratulated him on his being elevated to the post of County Commissioner for Surrey.

He said that we are the seventh largest Group in the District. We now have 17 girls in the Group. Mark Renton has agreed to become a leader. The Group is at full capacity and we cannot take more people without more leaders.

We are looking at a community impact project. The hut has been upgraded and we want to turn it into a multimedia and proper resource centre.

In response to a question from Kathy he said that for meetings only two adults were required. Offsite the requirements are different.

Ian Tanner has handed over Cubs to Jane Clark. Going well. Kate Renton helps with Cubs.

#### Treasurer's Report

John Garrett presented the financial accounts of the Group. Receipts are £2000 up, but expenses are higher because of major expense on the Hut. The HQ subscription item has gone down.

The reports were approved.

#### 5. Group Scout Leader's Nomination of Group Chairman

Matt Saker: Nominated by Ray and approved.

#### 6. Election of Group Treasurer and Group Secretary.

Treasurer: John Garrett: proposed by Kathy Di Franco; seconded by Matt Saker and elected.

Secretary: no nominations but Chris Rowlands will act until a successor is found.

#### 6. Nominations by GSL to the Group Executive and Election of Members to Group Executive

Kathy Di Franco, Sarah McGrath, Glenn McMurray, Mark Renton Chis Rowlands – approved and elected.

#### 9. Election of Independent Examiner

Marco di Franco; proposed by Andrew and seconded by Chris.

#### 10. Any Other Business

Joe Rogerson the District Commissioner congratulated the Group on great strides over the last two years; numbers have increased and there are more leaders. The group is vibrant, and that is a tribute to Ray. The objectives are the right ones and the Group is going about them in the right way.

Ray paid tribute to Andrew Grimme at his last meeting as Chair and for all the other roles he had carried out in the Group. Andrew reminisced about his time in the Group, from the age of eight, and explained how much it was a wrench for him to give up the last of his formal positions in the Group.

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## SECTION REPORTS

### Acting Group Scout Leader's Report

Each section has completed a report as to the activities that they have completed during 2016; as you will see all the sections have been very busy, both during the weekly evening meetings, and also putting on many other events both as sections and as part of District events.

The Group has grown in size with all sections retaining the young people, moving up through the group, from Beavers to Cubs, then on to Scouts; the older Scouts then moving up to Explorers where they can also complete their Duke of Edinburgh awards which include helping the younger sections.

Last year we completed several Group activities which were all well attended. These included St George's Day when everyone renewed their Scout Promise, to the Group Xmas party which everyone seemed to enjoy.

As usual the Group completed the annual Group Camp at Walton Firs in July, with all sections staying over. The Cubs, Scouts and Explorers all camped and the Beavers joined us for a sleepover on the Saturday. This year the young people were much more involved in setting up camp and then getting all the tents down at the end of the weekend. I think everyone had a great time and are looking forward to this coming year's camp.

As detailed in the Chairman's report the Group this year has seen changes to the Section Leader teams. The Beavers have got a new team from current parents, some as section helpers and a couple as warranted leaders. We have also welcomed new warranted leaders in both Scouts and Explorers. The group would like to welcome and say a big 'thank you' to all these new volunteers; Lucy, Paul, Anna, Kate, Mark and Alex for giving up your time and joining in the fun.

The last year we also saw several leaders moving on to other roles, Alison Reynolds has stepped down and become an Explorer Scout Leader elsewhere in the District and Ray has stepped down as Group Scout Leader (GSL) but has stayed on the Group Executive to continue to support us. As detailed above Beavers now have warranted Leaders in place, but this leaves the role of Group Scout Leader to fill. Over the last 6 months the role has been covered by several members of the Leadership team picking up the jobs that are traditionally covered by the GSL; however we urgently need to fill this role. The role is mainly administration and could be done by someone with or without scouting experience. If this is a role that you think you may be interested in or know someone who would suit this role please speak to one of the leaders or a member of the executive.

The Group supporters have been very busy organising the two jumble sales we put on each year. These Jumble sales take a lot of hard work over a short period of time and we really do need some more help. We are looking for help collecting on a Wednesday evening, setting up and taking down on Saturday and manning stalls on Saturday afternoon. Please can I ask you all to look to see when you could help; it only needs to be a couple of hours but the more people that get involved the easier it becomes. You will all get a call from a member of the executive sometime in April and please say yes to doing something. These Jumble sales are vital to allow us to put on all the wonderful activities for your young people without having to charge too much or anything at all.

Once again, a big thank you, to all the people who have helped and supported the Group over the past year. We are all looking forward to 2017 and another fun and exciting year.

**Vicky Tullett** for the uniformed leadership team.

## **Scout Report**

The last year has been an exciting one for the Scout section with lots of activities to get the Scouts out and about, resulting in several new awards, and decorating the Scout hut – including first place in the District incident hike last November, a competition the Scouts have not entered for a couple of years, 4th place overall in the District swimming gala, and reaching the semi-finals of the District 5-a-side competition. We're incredibly proud of the team spirit and can do attitude our Scouts have shown coming together to compete against hundreds of Scouts across the district in these events and it highlights how well the Scouts have come together as a group over the past year.

Our highlight of the year has been the Jack Petchey Award received by Zak Clark for his hard work at Scouts. A great result for him and the Scout section and an award he can be proud of. We have made a point of getting the Scouts out doing activities as much as possible, taking part in the District rafting event, Scout quiz night and paintballing day. We have also had two well attended camps with the Scouts with great feedback received from the parents and Scouts alike. Both of these were organised to be fun for the Scouts, alongside the teaching of core Scout skills – cooking over a fire, orienteering, pioneering and compass navigation. Earning badges is also an important part of scouting, and we have done work over the last year on the DIY badge, where we build cabinets that were eventually sold in the Jumble sale, Digital Citizen Badge, Chef Badge and GeoCaching.

The diverse programme we have run over the past year is keeping attendance high and we have nearly 30 Scouts on the register, with at least 24 attending most weeks. We have welcomed 17 new Scouts into the section with 10 Scouts leaving us, mostly moving up into the Explorer section.

Finally, our links with the Church are an important part of our identity and the Scouts have attended several events over the year, including the Remembrance Day and Mother's Day services where we parade with flags.

This has all been made possible through the fantastic support we receive from the exec, funding or underwriting all of the events we run, and of course the parents are an important part of the group, allowing their children to attend – and acting as the taxi service.

**Mark Renton**            Assistant Scout Leader

## **Cub Report**

This past year has been busy for the Cub pack. We have had a full pack each term. This year has been the celebration of 100 years of Cubs. The Cubs have taken part in many events; we went to London Zoo to celebrate 100 years a great day was had by all. Our Cubs attended the swimming gala where many medals were won. The Cubs joined the District in the annual Scootathon.

We have been working towards many badges: the astronomers badge was enjoyed by all with the solar system being created and a night walk at Wimbledon Common looking at the stars.

A firm favourite with the parents is the home help badge where our Cubs have to complete a lot of tasks at home. We have taken the Cubs to Flip Out which was a great evening for all. Group camp was again well attended by the Cubs and many activities and badge work completed. We went to Church Parades and St Georges Day.

We ended the year with our Cubs having a talent show where they show us just how talented they are which is always a great evening for our leadership team. Finally we celebrated our 100th year by having a birthday party and the renewal of the Cub promise by all the leaders, Explorers, Scouts and Cubs; a very proud moment.

All of this would be possible if I didn't have such a great team of people helping me so I would like to give a very big thank you from myself and the Cubs to Bob, Kate, Evan, Giles, Scarlett, Vinnie and Zak.

**Jane Clark**          Cub Leader

### **Beaver Report**

Beavers continues to be oversubscribed, and has a continuing problem with getting adult help.

During the year we have done Outdoors, Exploring, Navigation and Campcraft badges. We have attended the St George's Day Parade, District Sports Day, and the District visit to Legoland Windsor.

We camped overnight at the Group's Annual camp at Walton Firs.

In the autumn term we focused on the My World challenge badge and some Beavers and parents attended a party to celebrate 30 years of Beavers in the District.

Since the end of the year Alison Reynolds our Beaver Leader has left, and currently four of the parents are going to run Beavers between them, with three of them becoming warranted leaders. These parents are: Anna Harris, Lucy Pasfield, Paul Chequer and Ann-Marie Eaton. Lucy now has a warrant and Anna and Paul have started the process. Ann-Marie is going to continue as a parent helper.

### **Merton Park Explorer Unit**

2016 was a busy year for the Explorer Unit; we had many activities taking place both on our meeting night, Wednesday, and at the weekends.

We had 5 coming up from the Scout section and a couple of the older Explorers went off to university and gap years; this gave us a unit of 14 Explorers. The Leadership team remains the same with myself, Clive, Tom and Alex all working together to give the Explorers a varied programme across the year.

As previous years we started off 2016 with the district Paintball event. All enjoyed it and were already planning how they would play next year in 2017. The team that the Explorer Scouts were in came first so plenty of celebrations took place.

For the first time the unit decided to incorporate the Duke of Edinburgh Awards into our programme. The three stages, Bronze, Silver and Gold match the three awards in Explorers, Platinum Award, Diamond Award and The Queen's Scout Award. Over March and Easter both practice and qualifying hikes were organised and completed, with the Explorers then reporting back to the Scouts and presenting what they did and the walk they had completed. There were 6 Explorers completing their Bronze Award, with plans for them to progress on to Silver and Gold.

Over the year the Explorers have supported the Group in various ways. Some of the Explorers attend other sections weekly to help with their activities, Beavers, Cubs and Scouts. This goes towards part of their various awards they are individually working towards. The unit also took an active part in the Group camp, helping to organise some of the activities and supporting the Leader team. As you will read in other parts of the Group report there are also two Jumble sales. The Unit helped with the collecting and sorting and then on Saturday manned a stall and helped with the refreshments.

The Unit has also taken part in District events, Monopoly Run (we came 3rd), Dodge ball completion, St George's Day Parade and Remembrance Sunday Parade on Wimbledon Common. At our Wednesday meetings we completed many different activities from the traditional Scouting activities like mapping, backwoods cooking and camp planning to more modern activities like 'Airhop'.

Also in 2016 the Unit took the decision to join with the District to offer an overseas adventure to the Explorers which 5 of them have taken up and will be travelling with 35 others to Kandersteg in August 2017.

I would just like to take this opportunity to thank the Leadership team of the Unit; Clive, Tom and Alex, for all the time they have given up over the last year to make these activities possible.

**Vicky Tullett** Explorer Leader