

17th New Forest South (Hordle) Scout Group

Annual General Meeting

Minutes

18th October 2021

Held at the Scout Hut, Vaggs Lane, Hordle

1. Introduction

2. Apologies

3. Approval of minutes from last AGM (2019)

Proposed by Gaye Padley

Seconded by Maria Duebel

4. Treasurers Report

Presented by Maria Duebel

Attention was drawn to the lack of income over the past year due to subs not being collected while face to face meetings were not allowed and the usual fund raising activities not taking place. Although applications were made for various grants made available by the government, unfortunately the group was not eligible for any of them.

2020 Accounts were approved - Proposed by Gaye Padley

Seconded by Zuzana Dzibelova

5. GSL Report

Sharon Sheard

At times over the last challenging year or so I have wondered whether we would ever be together in the hut again and even whether the group would manage to survive. However, things are beginning to change for the better for the Group, although there is still some way to go.

Firstly when we started to meet face to face again, numbers of young people were at an all-time low for Hordle although this was not unusual around the country. Numbers have improved slightly and we now have 16 Beavers, 7 Cubs and 5 Scouts. Sadly all our pre-Covid Scouts are now either too old for Scouts or decided not to return.

We also found ourselves without a number of adults, again in common with many other groups. Sadly Colin Bix and Hannah Izod both decided to hang up their neckers for the last time and Caroline Harker, Gary Parsons senior and Jo Evans have all resigned from their positions on the committee since the last AGM. Thanks to all of them for everything they have done for the Group over the years. This has obviously left us with huge holes to fill and I am very grateful to Gaye Padley for taking on the role of Cub Leader. She wasn't put off by a term of helping me out with Cubs and is now running the meetings with another leader in

the background until her position has been formalised by the district. We have also had a change round of leaders so Steve is now the Scout Leader, Jonathan is a Section Assistant for Beavers and Lou Wilks is an Assistant Cub Leader.

I would like to thank Steve in particular and Lou Wilks for keeping things going for the Cubs and Beavers when we finally ventured into the realms of Zoom....who knew there were so many jokes about ducks?!

Sadly we have achieved very little of the development mentioned in the minutes for the last AGM. Our priority for the next year has to focus on our adult volunteer shortage and building up our reserves again so that we can afford some of the maintenance work on the hut that is now desperately needed. We also look forward to being part of the new district, New Forest Solent, a merger of New Forest South and New Forest East.

6. Section Reports

Beavers – Sharon Sheard

The period has been one of two parts: pre-Covid and Lockdown and beyond.

2019 saw Beavers taking part in all the usual Scouting activities while having fun and making new friends. They joined the rest of the group at our Group camp at Wilverley for a night where they completed the requirements for the camp craft badge and some of the challenge award requirements. They cycled along the old railway track for their cyclist badge and when we were back indoors for meetings they worked towards their International badge and enjoyed making balloon cars.

Then everything came to an abrupt halt. We kept in touch via email with suggestions for badge work and reminders of the national Scouting initiatives such as the hike to the moon and camping suggestions. Several of the Beavers were quite active in completing badges.

It was a relief to be back to face to face Scouting for a while in the autumn term of 2020 although we were somewhat restricted in what we could undertake. However, those who did return appeared to enjoy the programme.

With lockdown after Christmas 2020, we decided to venture into the world of Zoom meetings with some success although many decided it was not for them after a day of online activities for school. Again, it was with enormous relief that we returned to face to face Scouting after Easter this year. The colony started the summer term with just 4 Beavers but word got around that we were back and the colony is now up to 16 with more due to join next term. At the beginning of this term we made the most of the lighter evenings and went to Wilverley for an evening of den building and attempting to follow a trail laid by the Scouts and on another evening, enjoyed flying some home-made kites. Now it is back to mainly indoor meetings, but there is still plenty to look forward to.

Cubs – Sharon Sheard

Like the Beavers, the Cubs were involved in their usual activities in the pre-Covid period. Hannah and Jonathan ran a very full programme for the Cubs. In addition to the Group camp, they had a sleepover in the hut and completed all the requirements for the DIY badge while they were there.

There was some contact with the Cubs during the first lockdown via email with ideas for badge work but everyone was pleased to get back to face to face Scouting in the autumn term of 2020. Sadly it was short lived and by January of this year, we also tried Zoom meetings with the Cubs. They appeared to enjoy them in the main but I am not sure that the parents were so enthusiastic about all the charges around their houses to find various items for scavenger hunts and other games (there were some audible groans when the mute button wasn't used!). I think that we did improve the programme after a while and we enjoyed catching up with the Cubs and finding out about their camping experiences at home, indoor and outdoor. They managed to fulfil the requirements for the space badge and a few others. Thanks to parents who helped with all the photographs sent of badge work.

The summer term of this year saw us back outside with the Cubs engaging with pioneering projects and team challenges, firelighting and the naturalist badge. They too have been to Wilverley for an evening this term and are now working on the science badge. They are a very small pack at the moment and are looking forward to a few more members when some of the older Beavers move up.

Scouts – Steve Storey

The previous Scout Leader, Colin Bix, was thanked by Steve for his contribution to the Scout section and the Group. Very few Zoom meetings were held for the Scout section during lockdown and now that face to face meetings have resumed, numbers have dropped significantly. Steve took over as Scout Leader when face to face meetings resumed and is looking forward to the challenge of building up the section again with the new younger members.

Blue Wolves Explorer Unit – Martin Day and Ben Brearley

The past few years brought new challenges for the Scout Organisation, yet Explorers displayed great creativity in adapting to these difficult circumstances. Throughout the long hiatus of lockdown, on our own initiative we organised unofficial forest hikes so that we could continue to enjoy outdoor activities, whilst of course ensuring we abided by the restrictions of the time. Individual members organised their own evenings via Zoom, often to great success, with innovative activities such as microwave baking, online mini games and quizzes – typically done within the confines of a 40 minute free trial.

Once lockdown ended, we were able to return to in-person meetings in force, although our membership had dipped somewhat. Still not being allowed to meet indoors was no problem; aside from many, many forest walks, we undertook a wide variety of other activities, from campfires to crabbing to even a casino night. Water activities were also prevalent, whether that meant paddle-boarding or falling into rivers.

By far the climax of the year was our summer camp, a trip to Snowdonia National Park. The joys of sleeping on average 4 hours a night to then spend your days hiking up the formidable terrain that is Snowdon cannot be understated, nor can the strong relationships formed in such an unforgiving and hostile place as Wales. We learnt much about the environment in which we were staying, from the shockingly low value of land on Anglesey to the perfect skimmability of stones on the north coast. The weather was consistently terrible, as might be expected in the region, but it didn't dampen our spirit, nor did 4 minute showers or sausages burnt to ash by members untrained in such esoteric skills as cooking. It was a thoroughly great time, and special credit must be given to of course our unit leader, Bruce,

