

## **16th Harrogate Scout Group**

### **GSLs Report to the AGM - Sunday 29th September 2013**

#### **Mike Higlett, Group Scout Leader**

I make no apology for once again stating that it is a pleasure to be the Group Scout Leader of such an active and high quality Scouting group. The GSL role is to oversee and manage the delivery of Scouting to the young members of the group through trained, effective leaders. In the 16th Harrogate we are very lucky to have a team of very enthusiastic leaders, and that is where the hard work is evident.

Testament to this effort is the number of Chief Scout's Awards achieved in each section. This is the top award achieved in each section by gaining all of the relevant challenge badges, requiring effort and commitment from the young scout and is not given away lightly. In Scouting we have the 'balanced programme' principle which aims to deliver broad, quality Scouting; it is because our leaders deliver a balanced programme that our young scouts have the opportunity to achieve the Chief Scout's Award.

I'll not spend time summarising the activities our young scouts have had opportunity to participate in, these are covered well in the section reports, but I would urge you have a look at the variety of activities on offer. Adventure is a key aspect of the Scout programme, be it walking through autumn leaves as a Beaver Scout or climbing a Lake District mountain as a Scout. In Cubs and Scouts some of that adventure comes through 'nights away', you'll see that as well as a main week long camp each year there are weekend opportunities each term.

Our relationship with our sponsoring body, Bilton Area Methodist Church, has continued to grow over the past year. The obvious benefit of the association is that we enjoy heavily subsidised accommodation for our meetings but the number of events where we work together is growing. Most church services that are also parade services for the group have some involvement from the Scout Group; the church Summer Club this year saw a handful of Scouts being part of the volunteering team of helpers and next year to celebrate of 50th anniversary the church plans to close its doors one Sunday Morning and have its service out here at Thornthwaite during our 50th Anniversary camp. To BAMC the church is the people, not the building, and it sees the Scout Group as an important part of that.

Just mentioned, next year is our 50th Anniversary year, the group being formed officially on 30th June 1964. As part of the celebrations we are planning a Group Camp here at Thornthwaite which will also have family involvement. More celebration details to follow as we plan them.

A more pressing issue we have in the group is that of Section Leadership. You'll be aware from communications over the last year that we have been looking for new leaders for over 12 months. I have in fact followed a variety of leads and been advertising outside of the group too, but despite speaking with large number of people I have so far been unable to satisfy our need. Within the next few months this will reach crisis point and if I'm unable to fulfil some of these roles I will need to look at reducing the frequency of some meetings to fortnightly or even consider closing a section, bringing to an end your child's scouting.

I know I have asked amongst parents for assistance in filling these roles but I now seek your help in spreading the net wider. Most recruits (over 85%) are already known to Scouting, but it is these routes that have so far failed so I'm looking to investigate the remaining 15%. If you have links to the staff of local

schools, can put up a poster in your workplace, or are prepared to assist with leaflet distribution, please let me know and I will welcome your help? If you know any other good way of getting to that 15% please share it with me. Specifically the roles we need to fill are.

#### In Beavers

Rebecca runs an excellent colony that has been previously recognised by district for its Scouting quality, but she is our only full time adult leader. A second pair of hands to just share only some of the jobs would help immensely. Without this colony meetings may have to be dropped to fortnightly.

#### In Cubs

We were all very happy for Rikki when she married Gavin in April, but this means she has moved to South Wales (to continue Scouting there) and has left a very big hole in the Cub leadership team. Another adult to join the team for one of the two nights a week would make things a lot easier.

#### In Scouts

At the end of December Clive will be retiring after 47 years as Scout Leader. Although the rest of the leadership team wish to continue helping to deliver a full scouting programme and Clive will be available in a skills instructor role, none of them are in a position to take on the role of Scout Leader. Without me filling this role, Troop closure is a real possibility.

#### On the Exec Committee

We are currently without a secretary and only have the scout section represented by a parent rep. It would be good to fill these roles.

For all these roles full training is available, including in areas that certainly 'beef up' your own CV.

It only remains for me to thank all the leaders for the hard work they have put into running very successful sections over the past 12 months, and to the executive committee for administering the group finances and assets. I have enjoyed working with you all and look forward to delivering another report of 12 months successful Scouting next year.

Mike Higlett  
Group Scout Leader  
16th Harrogate