

GSL Report 2017

Parents will remember that we struggled with hut cleaning at the beginning of this year and I am pleased to say this has been resolved, at least for the time being. As part of this, we were very fortunate in the Spring to have Saxon Weald offer to help us deep clean the headquarters as part of their helping in the community initiative. Not only did they turn up in numbers armed along with all the equipment and consumables, they undertook some essential maintenance and also managed to get donations of equipment from their own network of businesses and as a result, we now have a new wet vac, new blinds in all rooms and a new LCD projector. We are indebted to them for their generosity and for the way they all got stuck into a thankless task. I would like to say “well done” and a big thank you to Saxon Weald.

Now to Scouting Activities. We enjoyed a good turnout for the annual St Georges Day parade where all sections were well represented and everyone was on their best behaviour – well done to all who took part.

We also joined in the annual Riverside Walk for the second time this year. We provided the tents again for the lunch stop at Warnham Nature Reserve which were well appreciated by many when the sun came out. Put that in your diaries for next year.

During the year all sections have spent nights away and have enjoyed lots of outdoor activities. The photos around the room are proof that most enjoyed themselves. Copies of all photos on display can be ordered for a small donation. Please ask for help if you need help with the process.

The past twelve months have been full of challenges for all the adult volunteers at 1st Roffey. Whilst some families understand the commitment made by the adults who keep 1st Roffey alive, there are many more who I doubt have much of an idea as to how much hard work goes on behind the scenes.

Our numbers remain high this year which is a proper endorsement of the quality of Scouting we deliver. We are pretty much fully subscribed with just over 100 young members across 4 sections at my last count – as many as we have had for several years. The wanting to join list is also growing and there is no end in sight to the queue of parents who think Scouting will do something positive for their children.

All of us who volunteer at 1st Roffey do so because we enjoy seeing the youngsters develop in front of our eyes. We enjoy watching them learn life skill through engaging in the Scouting principals and through working together on challenging activities. We also enjoy each other’s company as Scouting truly does provide lifelong friendships for everyone involved.

For every penny we spend on equipment, hut maintenance, running the minibus etc. there are many hours of fund raising and grant applications to be spent by the Exec committee members. Without these dedicated adult members we would fail and fail fast so my next “thanks” at this AGM goes to all those parents and supporters who give up their time to enable the exciting and challenging programme we use to improve the life chances of all the young members we have.

Part of my responsibility is succession planning for all the adult roles in the Group. Whether we like it or not, we are all getting older so bringing in younger leaders is essential to future proof the Group and to provide a balance of experience and knowledge in the leadership teams of each

section. We cannot assume we will remain so lucky as to keep our leaders in all sections until they eventually retire (or in some cases, after they retire).

I am delighted to say that during the year we have recruited two new assistant Scout leaders in Lauren Langdon and David Stanley. Lauren has been with us for a couple of terms and Dave is just starting this term. I hope they will both be with 1st Roffey for many years to come so welcome Lauren and Dave. However, we would still benefit from some more help in all the sections as work patterns continue to disrupt leader's availability. We could also really do with another female Scout leader as girls now make up one quarter of our troop and rising. Ditto the Explorer Unit where more than one third are female and also rising. If you think you can help please speak to me at any time.

At the AGM it is customary for the GSL to thank the uniformed leaders for all that they deliver week in and week out but a simple "thank you", whilst sincerely meant, would not be enough to convey the appreciation that I have for all they do and I know that parents feel the same way. With enough adults, you can form a Scout Group but to have one as good as 1st Roffey requires more than just a few leaders. To do that they all need to be committed, dedicated, energetic, enthusiastic and well trained and for these reasons, 1st Roffey is, in my eyes, simply the best. A sincere thank you from me and on behalf of all our parents to all of you who make that happen.

As a measure of the longevity of some of our leaders I feel obliged to point out that we have one family in first Roffey with three generations active at the same time. The Whymark family has been involved at Roffey for as long as I can remember with Graham having served as Akela for many years before his son Gareth took over and now with Gareth's children in the Group it's a full house.

The White family come a close second with Dave having been Scout leader for many years, his son Simon, who was also a Scout here, helping out with watersports and other activities when work allows and Simon's two sons now in Beavers and Cubs. All the evidence is in the photos!

Finally, I would like to say a few words about a couple of our Scout leaders.

John Lucy first volunteered in October 1992 when his son joined up. He has been an assistant scout leader ever since. Through thick and thin, John has been there attending troop nights and camps and just getting on with whatever he has been tasked to undertake. John is retiring from work shortly and has asked to take a more back seat role at Troop nights from this term. Don't worry, he is not leaving us as I won't let him! However he may not be present as regularly as he has been so I wanted to explain that to everyone and I would like to thank John sincerely for all that he done for 1st Roffey in the last 25 years.

Now to Dave White. Dave first volunteered as an assistant section leader in September 1989 and then took over the Section leader role in October 1996. He remained in that position until illness forced his temporary withdrawal in 2015. To my delight Dave recovered and re-joined the Section in the summer of 2016. However, last Christmas Dave made the decision to stand down and has now changed his role to one at Group level where he is free to contribute to any section as and when needed. He continues to organise the troop's training and attendance at the Downsman and Overland hike competitions as well as organising the annual downs link bike ride. Whilst he has not yet fully retired from Scouting, and I hope he never does, this is the first time I have been

able to thank him publicly for all he done for 1st Roffey Scouts. We are indebted to Dave and are unlikely to see anyone else who will make a greater contribution. Thanks Dave!

Chris Sillett

Group Scout Leader