



**10th ROYAL ELTHAM SCOUT GROUP
(SHOOTERS HILL)**

ANNUAL REPORT 2023 - 2024

Presented on Thursday 13th June 2024 at 18.45

Christ Church Primary School Hall, Shooters Hill, SE18.

Group Scout Leader, Mr Alexander Bienkov

Registered Charity No.1039184

Scout Registration No.19445

Established in 1938

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE 10TH ROYAL ELTHAM SCOUT GROUP

THURSDAY 13th JUNE 2024 AT 19.00

AGENDA

- | | |
|---|------------------------|
| 1, Presentation of the Colours and Flag Break | GSL |
| 2, Welcome from the Group Scout Leader | GSL |
| 3, Squirrel Scouts Awards | Squirrel Scout Leaders |
| 4, Notes on how the AGM will be conducted | Kalpana Tanna |
| 5. Opening remarks and apologies for absence | Kalpana Tanna |
| 6. Chairman's report, appeal and matters arising | Kalpana Tanna |
| 7. Treasurer's report and approval of accounts for the last year | Stuart Lyons |
| 8. Section Reports noted | GSL |
| 9. Approval of the Annual Report | Kalpana Tanna |
| 10. Open Selection Process and call for Nominations for Trustee Board | Helen White |
| 11. Election of the Members of the Trustee Board | Kalpana Tanna |
| 12. Nomination of Leaders to the Trustee Board | GSL |
| 13. Appointment of Independent Examiner / Scrutiniser | Stuart Lyons |
| 14. Group Scout Leader's Address | GSL |
| 15. Informal Questions and Answers | Kalpana Tanna/GSL |
| 16. Any Other Business | Kalpana Tanna |
| 17. Beaver, Cub, Scout and Explorer Awards and Investitures | All Section Leaders |
| 18. Explorer Scout Presentation | Explorer Scout Leaders |
| 19. Return of the Colours and Flag Down | GSL |
| 20. Refreshments | All |

10TH ROYAL ELTHAM SCOUT GROUP, ADULT VOLUNTEERS JUNE 2023 – JUNE 2024

TRUSTEES

Chairman	Vacant*
Group Administrator	Helen White*
Group Treasurer	Stuart Lyons*
Admissions Administrator and Safeguarding	Denise O'Malley*
Quartermaster	Nigel Orton*
Communications Administrator	Deborah Dumville*
Premises Coordinator	Sud Bodhinayke*
Squirrel Parent	Simon Stevens*
Grants	Chris Walsh*
Beaver Parent	Vacant*
Cub Parent	Claire Naiken*
Scout Parent	Vacant*
Explorer Parent	Kalpana Tanna*
Transport Manager	John Field

LEADERS

Group Scout Leader	Alexander (Skip) Bienkov*
Squirrel Scout Leader	Anna-Maria Bienkov*
Assistant Squirrel Scout Leader	Lucy Timmons
Beaver Scout Leader	Row Pinto*
Assistant Beaver Scout Leader	Vacant
Sectional Assistant	Claire Naiken*
Sectional Assistant	Deidre Pinto
Cub Scout Leader	Deli Bryan
Assistant Cub Scout Leader	John Ball
Assistant Cub Scout Leader	Vince Bryan*
Assistant Cub Scout Leader	Ian Shearring
Scout Leader	Ruby Shand
Assistant Scout Leader	Martina Douglas
Assistant Scout Leader	Marc Hopkins*
Sectional Assistant	Sam Brown
Explorer Scout Leader	Vacant
Assistant Explorer Scout Leader	Andrew Crompton
Assistant Explorer Scout Leader	Andrew Stanley
Assistant Explorer Scout Leader	Louis Pinto
Trustees*	

10TH ROYAL ELTHAM SCOUT GROUP AGM MINUTES 13th JUNE 2024

Meeting held at: Christ Church Primary School Hall on 15th June 2023 between 19.00 and 21.30.

Leader and Trustee Attendees; 19, Parents 75, members 76.

Apologies: None.

Deborah Dumville welcomed the attendees, detailed how the AGM would be conducted and discussed the AGM report which was distributed to all attendees via email and hard copy.

GSL Alexander Bienkov addressed the attendees and discussed volunteering, waiting lists and the importance of uniforms. We also learnt about the new section of the Squirrel Scouts for 4–6-year-olds.

Section Reports were noted in the distributed annual report.

Lynne Nazer presented Treasurer's report and accounts were approved for 2022-23

Deborah Dumville highlighted and asked for approval of the Annual Report

Deborah Dumville called for nominations for Trustee Board in particular Chairperson which is currently vacant. Election of the Members of the Trustee Board

Stuart Lyons to replace Lynne Nazer as Treasurer.

Proposed by Helen White – Seconded by Ruby Shand & Marc Hopkins

Helen White to continue as Group Administrator

Proposed by Deborah Dumville- Seconded by Deli Bryan & Vince Bryan

Nigel Orton to continue as Quartermaster.

Proposed by Helen White - Seconded by Marc Hopkins & Vince Bryan

Deborah Dumville to continue as Trustee Responsible for Communications

Proposed by Alex Bienkov - Seconded by Ruby Shand & Sud Bodhinayake

Denise O'Malley to replace Claire Jones as Trustee Responsible for Admissions

Proposed by Deborah Dumville - Seconded by Helen White & Deli Bryan

Denise O'Malley to continue as Trustee Responsible for Safeguarding

Proposed by Denise O'Malley - Seconded by Deborah Dumville & Lynne Nazer

Sud Bodhinayake to continue as Trustee Responsible for Premises

Proposed by Row Pinto - Seconded by Ruby Shand & Marc Hopkins

Clare Naiken to continue as Cub Pack Parent

Proposed by Alex Bienkov - Seconded by Sud Bodhinayake & Row Pinto

Martin Hall to continue as Trustee

Proposed by Deborah Dumville - Seconded by Claire Jones & Pauline Macklin

Final call out for any other interested parties to engage with Trustees afterwards to discuss the remaining roles

Trustee Board Elected Members* to sit in the role for the next 12 months.

Presentations were awarded to the Drey, the Colony, the Pack, the Troop and to the Unit.

Next AGM Thursday 13th June 2024 at Christ Church School Hall.

Helen White, Group Administrator

10TH ROYAL ELTHAM SCOUT GROUP

STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT OF THE SCOUT GROUP

The Scout Group's governing documents are those of the Scout Association. They consist of a Royal Charter, which in turn gives authority to the Bye Laws of the Association and The Policy, Organisation and Rules of The Scout Association.

The Group is a Trust established under its rules which are common to all Scout Groups
The trustees are appointed in accordance with the Policy, Organisation and Rules of the Scout Association.

The Group meets the Charity Commission's public benefit criteria under both the advancement of education and the advancement of citizenship or community development headings.

The Group is managed by the Group Executive Committee, the members of which are the Charity Trustees; the Chairman, Treasurer and Secretary, the Group Scout Leader, the individual Section Leaders (Beavers, Cubs, Scouts, Explorers) and parent representatives. The Committee meets periodically throughout the year (at least 3 times).

The Group Executive Committee exists to support the Group Scout Leader in meeting the responsibilities of the appointments and is responsible for:

- Maintenance of Group property.
- Raising of funds and the administration of the Group finances.
- Insurance of persons, property, and equipment.
- Appointing Group Administrators and Advisors other than those who are elected.
- Recruitment of Adult Volunteers.

RISKS TO THE SCOUT GROUP

Reduced income from fundraising: The Group is reliant upon income from subscriptions and fundraising. The Group should hold a reserve to ensure continuity of activities should there be a major reduction in income. The committee could raise the subscription rate to alleviate a shortfall.

Reduced volunteers or children: The Group is totally reliant upon volunteers to run and administer the activities of the Group and any reduction or loss of leaders may result in closure of the group if replacements cannot be found. The Group provides activities for all young people aged 6 to 18. A reduction in membership in a particular section or group would result in contraction, consolidation or closure of a section or the Group.

Risk and internal control: The Group has in place systems of internal controls that are designed to provide reasonable assurance against material mismanagement or loss, including 2 signatories for accounts and comprehensive insurance policies to ensure risks are covered.

Objectives of the Scout Group: The objectives of the Group are as a local unit of the Scout Association. The Aim of the Scout Association is to promote the development of young people in achieving their full physical, intellectual, social, and spiritual potentials as individuals, as responsible citizens and as members of their local, national and international communities.

The method of achieving the Aim is by providing an enjoyable and attractive scheme of progressive training based on the Scout Promise and Law and guided by adult leadership.

CHAIR'S REPORT

Looking back over the activities provided by our wonderful team of leaders this year, it is clear that the young people of the 10th Royal Eltham Scout Group have continued to experience a thorough and heartily enjoyable programme of scouting activities. We are currently in a position where we are able to offer wonderful opportunities to develop scouting skills in young people from the ages of four to eighteen years old. Similarly, the values and confidence instilled through participation will undoubtedly serve to enhance and strengthen our community in Shooters Hill. This is also a good opportunity to thank all parents and carers in supporting our young people and leaders in this journey.

Focusing on the group's finances, careful management of our resources has meant we are in a stable position as we approach the end of the scouting year. Careful budgeting over the last few years has meant that we have been able to replace our old minibus with a fantastic newer model. Similarly, in utilising the ULEZ scrappage scheme, we avoided any negative impact on our finances and ultimately our wider delivery of scouting. At the same time, our young people will benefit from a new well-equipped minibus that will enable us to access scouting activities well beyond the bounds of Shooters Hill. Well done to Skip and his sub-committee for their excellent work in procuring this amazing piece of kit!

Looking forward, we are determined to continue our search for a permanent home for the 10th Royal Eltham. Whilst Shrewsbury House is a more than adequate location for the time being, we are ultimately short-term tenants. Our aim is to provide a secure future for the group by finding a permanent base of our own in the local area. This is a challenging task - which is why we have created a sub-committee of parents, friends and leaders to work on identifying a potential new permanent home. This committee would therefore very much welcome any additional input from the wider XRE community in this quest.

Our other main challenge for the near future is recruiting new members to join our wonderful team of Leaders and Trustees committee. Whilst our volunteer leaders offer imaginative and rewarding activities on a weekly basis, the weight of this is shared out between a relatively small team of adults. We urgently need to enlarge our team if we are to maintain our excellent programme. At the same time, we are required to recruit a chairperson for the Trustees committee. This will enable us to provide essential support to our leaders on all issues relating to scouting on Shooters Hill. Similarly, it is a sign of the strength of our leaders that we have a waiting list across all units that is moving towards 100 young people. However, it is unfortunately likely that a large proportion of this number will never have the opportunity to benefit from joining the 10th Royal Eltham Scout Group. Without recruiting further leaders, we need to keep a tight cap on our membership numbers.

In conclusion, whilst we are aware of the challenges ahead and the pressing need to tackle them head on, we should be proud of completing a successful 86th year as the 10th Royal Eltham Scout Group - and in continuing to imaginatively develop scouting skills and values in over 100 young people from Shooters Hill.

Nigel Orton - Quartermaster

TREASURER'S REPORT

The Group ended the year of 2023 with a balance of ~41k. £9K of this is Restricted use (see below) and £20k is the balance remaining from the COVID grants. The group undertook a bag pack that generated £1175 of donations. The COVID-19 support has left the accounts in a very strong position and following a £5 per month per member increase in fees the section is no longer running at a deficit.

Gift aid this year was £2.1K a small increase on last year's £1.9K. The Group continues to manage all subscription payments over to OSM (Online Scout Manager) and are encouraging all eligible parents/guardians to sign up to Gift Aid at the same time to boost this figure.

Now that everyone is on OSM all events are set up through the system and payments by parents/carers made directly via Direct Debits they have set up. Leaders can easily check whether all payments have been made, eliminating keeping separate records.

Following the end of the reporting period (31 December 2023) the trustees approved the purchase of a replacement minibus for £26,995. The purchase of the minibus reflects the long held ambition of the Trustees to replace the sections' mini bus. As a result of the ever expanding ULEZ rules and costs, the Government have announced that by 2030 all new diesel and petrol vehicles will be banned. In order to assist with the transition TFL announced a scrappage scheme. The group were able to benefit from it and as a result received £9K under the scrappage scheme.

The valuation of our hut and equipment remains the same and sufficiently covers our inventory. There is a security system installed in the hut, which reduces our insurance slightly. There is a small annual cost to maintain this system.

We still hold a ringfenced £3k from the Don Broome Trust. This was a grant awarded to use for a "development project" only. This money cannot be used for running costs, equipment, minibus purchase etc.

In addition the Group received a £6K anonymous payment in October 23. The treasure has been unable to identify the source of this "donation" and as a result, for prudence, the amounts remain ringfenced.

A scrutinised and signed copy of this report and financial statement are held by the Group Treasurer with all supporting documentation.

Stuart Lyons - Group Treasurer

Item	Unrestricted	Restricted	Total funds
			FY23 at 31 Dec 2023
Membership	19,248		19,248
Anonymous donation		6,000	6,000
Explorer contribution	800		800
Gift aid	2,075		2,075
Bag pack	1,176		1,176
Other	262		262
Total income	23,561	6,000	29,561
			0
District fees	(4,101)		(4,101)
Rent	(8,035)		(8,035)
Insurance	(2,050)		(2,050)
Section fees	(11,386)		(11,386)
Total expenses	(25,572)		(25,572)
Deficit/ surplus	(2,010)		3,990
Opening cash			36,777
Mvt in cash			3,990
Closing Cash			40,766

QUARTERMASTER'S REPORT

Following a couple of years of investing in high quality resources, we are pleased that the group is currently very well equipped with quality kit. As a result, this year all sections have had access to high quality, durable and practical tents, burners and equipment. This has enabled our leaders to focus on safely and effectively developing scouting and cooking skills for their sections whilst away on camp. Most recently, this was evident in the Spring Scout Camp. All in all, we are well resourced for all camps and expeditions for the foreseeable future.

Nigel Orton - Quartermaster

ADMISSIONS ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT

During the past year, the number of children on our waiting lists have continued to grow. In particular, there are large numbers on both the Squirrel and Scout waiting lists.

Since its launch in April 2023, demand for places in the Squirrel Drey is high. Earlier this year, the squirrels increased their group size from 8 to 12 members. This has helped to relieve some pressure from the waiting list especially as more children reach their 6th birthday and move up to beavers. However, there are still 30+ children on the Squirrel waiting list.

This time last year there was no movement for the Group as the members were a long way off from being 14 years and 6 months-the age to move onto Explorers. It would appear, this coming year, that there will be some movement as some Scouts will move up to Explorers and we may be able to take some children from the waiting list to join the Scout group.

Sadly, many children remain on the waiting list for all sections often with little or no chance of ever being in a position to take up a place within our scouting sections.

Total number on the XRE waiting list: 94 young people (up from 68 last year).

Denise O'Mally - Admissions Administrator

LEADERS REPORTS

SQUIRREL SCOUTS 4-6 YEARS OF AGE

We recently celebrated 1 year of Squirrel Scouts at the XRE and what a year it has been! We hit the ground running... and haven't stopped!

The Squirrels have been super busy working towards and achieving many activity badges from Go Wild and Super Chef to Let it Grow and Let's Celebrate and are currently finishing off their Explore Outdoor badges by sharing with the Drey the Adventure Scrapbooks they completed over the half term break. They are also working towards their Local Superhero Badge and are very much looking forward to visiting Eltham Fire Station this Saturday to meet some real-life superheroes! All of the Squirrels have also either completed all or various parts of the All About Adventure and All Together challenge awards. Needless to say some of our Squirrels are running out of space on their sleeves!

A huge well done to Nadia, Rafe, Lucas and Eva who have achieved their Chief Scout's Acorn Awards; the highest award a Squirrel Scout can earn! This is a real achievement and is a demonstration of their adventurous spirit and caring, helpful natures.

In addition to our weekly meetings, the Squirrels have loved taking part in various activities with the District, whole XRE group and other sections. Our Squirrel Day Camp last year was a great success during which we joined the Beavers at Hope Hill and took part in a wide variety of activities including team games, hammock building and even campfire cooking! We're very much looking forward to running our Day Camp again this July. During the Jota/Joti District event, the Squirrels had a great time messaging in Morse code and sending their parachutists flying from the top of Severndroog Castle. We also had such fun at Group Campfire and are looking forward to singing many more Squirrel songs and 'shaking our tails' next time!

In January, we welcomed Lucy Timmons (Red) as Assistant Squirrel Scout Leader and were able to increase our numbers from 8 to 12 Squirrels. Thank you to Lucy and to our fabulous Young Leader, Ella Williams (Willow), for your time, energy and effort and all you do for our Drey. Thank you to our Squirrel parents who sign up to a weekly parent rota and assist at the weekly meetings; your continued support is very much appreciated.

Finally, well done to all of our Squirrels! They ensure my Saturday mornings are full of fun and laughter and their enthusiasm for each of our adventures is just wonderful. They join in brilliantly with every activity and team game; helping and encouraging each other along the way. They really are Super Squirrels!

Anna-Maria Bienkov (Nutkin) - Squirrel Scout Leader

BEAVER SCOUTS 6 – 8 YEARS OF AGE

Our Colony has 18 Beaver Scouts, 1 Beaver Scout Leader (Otter), 1 Sectional Assistant (Fox) Claire Naiken and we rely on the help of our Group Scout Leader Skip, to attend meetings when he is available. Beaver administration, programme planning, badgework and organising evenings is covered by the Section Leader and we rely on the help of Fox and Skip to run our weekly meetings, go on camp and attend day trips.

Over the past 12 months we have run a full programme and the Beavers have been awarded a massive 289 badges. This has included 70 Challenge Awards, 89 Staged Activity Badges, 110 Activity Badges ranging from Disability Awareness, Money Skills, Safety, International and the Gardeners badge. We are proud to have awarded 11 Beaver Scouts with the top Chief Scout Bronze Award.

Last Summer Term we enjoyed plenty of evenings outside. Highlights include pond dipping at Woodland Trust farm and paddle boarding at Beckenham Place Park lake on a hot Summer's evening. The Beavers achieved their Cycle badges and played wide games in the woods. Camp this year had a Roald Dahl theme and included visits from the BFG to blow dreams into the Beaver's tent and making dream jars. The Beavers laid fires and cooked on them, put up shelters, took part in archery, made small pioneering projects and had a Fantastic Mr Fox wide game. Hedgehog baked us the most amazing Willy Wonka chocolate cake for tea and The Twits inspired spaghetti bolognese.

In the Autumn Term we focused on Healthy eating and picked blackberries to make desserts. We all enjoyed coming together with the other Sections for the Group campfire and explored Oxleas woods going on an Autumnal scavenger hunt and cooking sausages over a fire. We completed our International badge finding out about Scouts in Germany, Cameroon and Japan. This involved the children flying around the world with passports and tickets and tasting delicious traditional snacks from Cameroon made by one of our parents. We worked on our Safety badge and arranged a fascinating visit to the mounted police horses in Lewisham which the children and Leaders loved.

Spring term began with an evening of problem solving and inventing machines. We focused on two Activity badges and had lots of fun earning our Money Skills and Disability Awareness with a visit from two Guide Dogs. After Easter we welcomed our first two Squirrel Scouts into the Colony and have been growing sunflowers and sweet peas from seed and planting them in our Squirrel and Beaver Garden at Shrewsbury house. A Skills evening encouraged the Beavers to learn how to make beds, iron and

tie their Scout scarves, decorate biscuits and light a candle to set off matchstick rockets. Many of the Beavers enjoyed a day trip to Conningbrook Lake in Ashford where they took part in a Water Activity day run by Kent Scouts using Bell-boats.

A huge thank you to Fox and Skip for all their hard work, ingenuity and support this year. Without them we would not be able to continue. We are very pleased that in the last term Hedgehog has been well enough to attend meetings again and are hugely grateful to Badger particularly for his help on camp. Thank you to our parents and to our Trustees who work tirelessly to support us in the background and ensure the smooth running of our Section.

Finally, a big 'Well Done' to our Beavers Scouts whose love and enthusiasm of all things Scouting has been our inspiration... haven't they done well this year!

Row Pinto (Otter) - Beaver Scout Leader

CUB SCOUTS 8 – 10 AND A HALF YEARS OF AGE

We meet at Shrewsbury House every Thursday from 6pm -7.30pm. Our 90 minutes as a Pack flies by and we try to fit in as much as possible into each meeting, doing a mixture of games and badge work activities. We currently have 32 members, which is the highest number we've had! We've said goodbye to a few of our older cubs recently, who have gone on to join our Scout Troop, and we've welcomed lots of Beavers who have moved up to join the Pack.

We have a full team of leaders. John, Vince Ian and I are assisted by Niall and Lucy as part of their Young Leader programme.

The Cubs have worked towards a number of badges this year including their Adventure Challenge, Skills Challenge and their Teamwork Challenge badge. They have also earned their Book Reader badge, Navigator levels 1 and 2, Pioneer badge, and a number of watersports badges. They are currently working towards their Fire Safety badge with a visit to East Greenwich fire station.

We are very proud that three of our members, Tommy, Sophie and Aiden have all earned the highest award that a Cub Scout can earn, their Chief Scout's Silver Award. They completed their Challenge Badges and many Activity Badges during their 2.5 years with the Pack. Well done!

The Pack have enjoyed a number of trips outside of their regular meetings. We went on our annual PGL camp in September to Windmill Hill near Hastings, which was a weekend of non-stop activities including rock climbing, abseiling, zip wiring, team games and so much more. We recently visited the Docklands Scout Project, a water sports activity centre in Docklands, where they took part in 4 activities – sailing, rowing, kayaking and canoeing. The Pack also took part in JOTA/JOTI and the Remembrance Day Parade in Eltham.

We have a packed schedule which takes us through to the summer holidays, and beyond that we are taking the Pack away on a weekend camp in the Autumn back to Windmill Hill PGL Centre

As always, I'd like to thank John Vince and Ian for their commitment to the Pack, they all help me run the section to the best of our abilities.

Deli Bryan (Akela) - Cub Scout Leader

SCOUTS 10 AND A HALF - 14 YEARS OF AGE

Well done to all leaders for providing a varied and exciting program this year for the 10th Royal Eltham Scout Troop!

The highest award a scout can gain is the Chief Scouts Gold Award, to gain the award each scout must complete 9 challenge badges on a variety of different themes and then 6 activity badges. This is achieved over the 4 years they spend as a member of the Troop. Each year the leaders sit down together and work out which badges to cover next so that every scout has the opportunity to complete their Gold Award.

We have our Patrol Leaders and Assistant Patrol Leaders ready to complete theirs before they move up to Explorers in the new year.

In amongst our program, we wanted to highlight some favourites, first off: Camping!

Since our last AGM we have taken our Scouts on 4 camps. Two of our Patrol Leaders spent 2 nights away on a water sports weekend and received amazing feedback from the organisers on their engagement and behaviours. We took the troop to East Grinstead for a 7 night camp at Broadstone Warren in August for our first summer camp since Ruby has been leader. It was such a success that we are doing it again this July! We visited the beach, raced go-karts, climbed walls and invited another troop over for a bonfire and smores.

We also camped in October for Cudham Shores first Halloween festival. It was a very wet weekend which involved a scary walk through the woods and lots of fun activities including a silent disco. Proud of the Scouts for how they dealt with the weather. In April we visited an old favourite and spent 3 nights in Hope Hill where we made friends and fed a group of teenagers completing their DOE awards. They were very grateful for the chicken curry. We had a nice long session of crossbow, had lots of free time and us leaders had a right giggle during a late night wide game.

We have also re-visited our little plot of land in Shrewsbury Park, trusted to us by the Friends of Shrewsbury Park team, to maintain and prune it. We spent a day planting a few hundred daffodil bulbs in the park to so look out for these when they come back next spring. The Scouts enjoyed giving some time to our local community and helping the place look brighter. It fills me with pride every time I drive past it especially seeing the beautiful daffodils.

We have been working hard on achieving our DIY badge too. The Scouts made some fantastic planters which we had an auction for and raised some money to be able to buy new compasses for our Troop so our oldest lot do not get lost when doing their expedition later this year.

I hope all parents have enjoyed the Scouts working on their Creative badge as it has meant a number of items have gone home with them including Christmas gnomes and Mother's Day cards. We also put together a beautiful wreath for last years remembrance parade. We will put our thinking caps on for a new way to show-off our skills this year.

A number of Scouts will be set the challenge to complete their personal challenge awards over the summer break as this is a big part of their Personal challenge award so parents, look forward to tidy rooms, hoovered floors, well-walked pets, and the washing up done!!!

Our leaders, Martina Douglas, and Marc Hopkins along with myself and Occasional Helper Sam Brown, have all worked hard this year to keep our members engaged and deliver a varied programme and a great scouting experience.

A varied programme requires Leaders volunteering to get together over long evenings after work or give up our weekends to put together interesting activities, ensure we are fully trained and can keep your children safe while out and about. If you find yourself free on a Tuesday evening feeling bored, can you come and teach a skill or run a badge? Do you have a skill that you would love to teach to a great bunch of young people? Photography? Cycling? Woodwork? Plumbing? Teach them how to wire a plug? Would you like to help but don't know how? Do you have a place we can take the Troop too? Are you the bee's knees at organising people? If you want to give any of our exciting activities a go or can help us in any way shape or form, please do come and talk to us or pop into the Troop on a Tuesday evening. Scouting is not just for our young members it's just as rewarding and exciting for we adults too. Please feel free to join us at any of our activities or meeting nights.

Ruby Shand - Scout Leader

EXPLORER SCOUTS 14 – 18 YEARS OF AGE

Explorer Scouts is District based and catering for young people between the ages of 14 and 18. Severndroog ESU have some 38 members coming from troops across Royal Greenwich.

Our programme remains varied – Wednesday evenings have included a Burns night, Pancake evening, urban orienteering, Trading games, Pétanque at Sidcup Boules club, apple pressing, games night at Shrewsbury House and we ran an inciteful event on "How to be an Ally" (to those being harassed). We have also been able to make visits to the outdoor light show at Canary Wharf, the Banff Film Festival, Military Musical "spectacular" at Horse Guards and to the theatre to see a play on slavery.

Weekends are also busy, we started with a winter paddle of the River Stour, the "Monopoly Run" in March, an "Army Day" team building event in July and in Oct we hosted the annual Jota/Joti event at Severndroog Castle. An event jointly run with the Cray Valley Radio Club whereby Scouts of all ages contact other scouts from across the globe by radio & the internet.

This year we had some 18 of our members complete DoE Canoe Expeditions (2 Bronze on the R Medway and 10 Silver & 6 Gold in Scotland on the Great Glen. The return journey from the Great Glen was eventful with a break-down in Glasgow meaning the unit travelled back from Glasgow via Uber taxis (cost £3.3k)!

In addition to the canoe expeditions, during the summer our members attended the South London trip to Croatia and we had 8 members in attendance at the World Scout Jamboree (WSJ) in Korea – whilst the event was well documented in the press for all the wrong reasons – our young people still managed to have a good time. To support them, before the summer break we ran a Korean evening where we had an ex-member from the Unit who went to the last WSJ held in Korea (1991) talking about his experiences, a Korean national talking about local etiquette and finishing with the unit cooking Korean food on Trangia's with a Korean chef!

In the autumn term we had two camps – a rather wet camp in the Ashdown Forest brightened by attending one of the Sussex bonfire parades and our annual Christmas camp – held indoor accommodation and centred around a full Christmas dinner!

During 2023/24 the Unit have continued to support the Friend of Oxleas Wood (with monthly volunteering), have provided Young Leaders to 10th RE and other Groups in the District, and had once again, the largest turnout at the Remembrance Parade. We have also supported the 10th Group fundraising at bag packs and campfires events.

As usual many thanks to all who have supported the Unit in 2023/24 particularly Andrew, Andy and Skip.

Louis Pinto - Assistant Explorer Scout Leader

GROUP SCOUT LEADER'S REPORT

I am certain I do not need to add anything to the previous Section reports on their successes and achievements over the last 12 months. I am truly amazed by the quality of programmes run by our very small team of dedicated adults, I can only imagine what more we could do if we had a full complement of leaders to run the Group?

Over the last year our waiting list has grown to become almost the same size as the total membership, parents within our local community and way beyond it are keen for their children to join the 10th Royal Eltham Scout Group. Sadly however, the reality is that many of those who would like to join us are going to be disappointed and will miss out on the Scouting experience. Each Section's numbers are capped, and we only have a few places to offer children from the waiting list each term, we would need to find a way of opening more Sections to accommodate them all. Until we can provide a place for every child who would like to join us then we are failing as a community and as a Group.

Scouting is dependent on volunteers, and I can only appeal, once again, to our 200 parents and the members of our community to stand up and come forward and help run our quality programme.

However hard it may be to find new Leaders to join our team, occasionally someone steps forward to volunteer. Please welcome Lucy Timmons to the 10th Royal Eltham Scout Group, Lucy will become an Assistant Squirrel Scout Leader to help run our Squirrels Drey along with Anna Maria Bienkov.

We have recently purchased a new (to us) Ford Transit Mark 8 17 seater minibus, to replace our non ULEZ compliant old minibus. Whilst the purchase price of £30k has stretched our finances, I believe that the investment is justified to ensure all our members have the chance of getting off the 'Hill' and out into the great outdoors to experience Scouting. Without having our own minibus and trailer we would be restricted to how far we could travel and would be reliant on parents driving their cars to get the Group to and from camps and activities throughout the year.

As you may well know our Scout Hut is under threat of demolition, due to the ongoing proposals by Christ Church to develop the land for housing. We recently formed a New HQ Sub Committee of parents and Trustees to investigate the possibilities of finding available land on Shooters Hill where we might be able to build a purpose built Scout Hut for the Group, that would meet all our needs. The 10th Royal Eltham has been on Shooters Hill Since 1938, providing Scouting to generations of families and I truly believe that our future would be more secure if we had our own building. This would provide much needed community space where we could run our meetings, store our equipment, park our minibus and trailers and hang our canoes.

Finally, thank you once again to all our wonderful Leaders, Section Assistants, Young Leaders, to our excellent Trustees Board and to all our parents that support us in our effort to sustain and develop excellent Scouting here on Shooters Hill.

Be Prepared!

Alexander 'Skip' Bienkov - Group Scout Leader