

St Oliver Plunkett Guides Unit Annual General Meeting – Nov 2024

Chair's Report

We would like to thank you for supporting our Unit in its 50th year, we wouldn't be able to keep going without your backing.

A lot has happened since our enrolment last year.

We've had Guides going Christmas shopping in Belfast. In January our whole Unit had a trip to the Pantomime in Lisburn. In February our Brigins went to Downpatrick with Brigins from all over the region and beyond for a celebration of 1500 years since St Brigid's birth, and they met Dana!! Also in February we got the whole Unit together for our annual celebration of World Thinking Day where we had a very competitive quiz. A few times this year we've had some of our parents who have come along to the den to do a variety of things. We had haircare advice, floristry demos and first aid training. We are forever grateful for any parents who can give us the benefit of their expertise, please contact us if you think you have skills to share! April saw us take the Brigins to the fire station and the Cygnets had loads of fun up at the Belfast HQ for their Regional Fun Day. As the days got longer we used our nearby outside space to our advantage and many trips to Lurgan Park and Oxford Island began after Easter. As the year drew to a close we had our awards night at the Rink in Portadown, much to the dismay of the leaders who either couldn't skate or got skated over!! June ended with a successful Brigin Holiday in Lorne House and Guide & Rangers Camp in Crawfordsburn.

But the time to start comes round again quickly and we've already had our Brigins away to Girdwood in Belfast for their Regional Fun Day and a sleepover with the Guides in the den. It's all gearing up for a busy year - keep your eyes on the Facebook page for more info!

Our Guide unit has nearly 90 members and is still going strong after 50 years and this is down to our unfailingly enthusiastic leaders. We have new leaders being enrolled tonight and they will follow in the footsteps of our other leaders as they plan, shop, take part in training courses, organise trips and outings. In short they keep the unit running smoothly, not just each Tuesday but all year long and from one year to the next. But we are aware that we need more help and will be seeking to recruit more leaders to effectively manage the numbers of girls that want to join our unit.

If being a leader is not for you would still really appreciate your help in a less formal way. If any of you could volunteer to be a parent helper it would be amazing. We will put you through the safeguarding process and you might only need to come up to the den once or twice a year when the need arises.

We have been fortunate to be able to always rely on the support of our families and the wider community. We know that these wonderful girls are so proud of their work and we believe

that together we are giving them the gift of Guiding through experiences and friendships that will last a lifetime. Our private and hidden Facebook page is a safe space where we can celebrate our girls' efforts, but more importantly we can communicate quickly and easily with all our parents this way. Kath Wilson, our Unit Secretary has done a full audit of this page to ensure the highest safeguarding standards. We understand that FB is not for everyone, but in this face-paced world, it's our best option and we encourage you even just to use it for the sole purpose of our Unit. It is vital that our parents and carers keep an eye on FB, especially on a Tuesday evening before you go up to the Den.

We also want to give an update on the collection process at 8pm. This seems to be working much better than before but we still need your help. It is vital that you come to collect your child on time, that you park responsibly well away from the double yellow lines outside the building. All this should ensure a safe and hassle-free experience!

Mairead Coulter is new current treasurer and she will publish the treasurer's report shortly and allow us to digest it before it is passed. She does assure us that although our bank balance remains healthy, prompt payments are vital for the smooth running of the finance side of things. A reminder to all that online payments must have the child's name in the reference.

All that remains is to thank everyone involved in our Unit, in whatever capacity, for their support through this year and we look forward to the same next year.