

4th Epping Forest South (Bancroft's School) Sea Scout Group



Charity Registration Number 1037676

Minutes of Annual General Meeting held on Wednesday 15th. September 2021

The Chairman, John Hasselgren, welcomed the small number present, especially our guests Steve Fothergill and Colin Wreyford, District Chairman and District Commissioner.

Apologies for Absence: These had been received from Mr. Joe Layburn, Mrs. Kerrin Percy and Steve Thirsk.

Minutes of Previous AGM: The minutes of the AGM held via Zoom on 23rd. September 2020 were accepted as a true record of that meeting.

Matters arising from the minutes: 1. The Sponsorship Agreement was still being held over due to difficulties caused by the Covid-19 pandemic. 2. The Accounts for the year ending 31st. March 2020 have been inspected by a former Treasurer of the Group; she had found them to be accurate and they showed no problems.

Chairman's Report: John Hasselgren reported a difficult year with many Scout meetings being held on line via Zoom, interspersed with more normal meetings as lockdown and School requirements for Scouts to be in year group bubbles allowed. However, excellent work by the Leaders had kept meetings running. How well this worked can be seen in the message sent by Mrs. Kerryn Percy:

I would like to add my thanks and appreciation for all that the group has been able to achieve this year despite the challenges of Covid restrictions, lockdowns and Redbridge council decisions! Isobel has had a brilliant time in scouts in this year and it's all down to the hard work and dedication of you all. Thank you so so much.

My thanks to all the Leaders. Special mention must be made of Matthew Balchin and Mel Knight who had not only provided much of this effort, but had also led the protest against the possible closure of Fairlop Outdoor Activity Centre, including arranging working parties to clear, tidy and redecorate the site. Despite all this they both found time to complete their mandatory training, culminating in the award of their Wood Badges.

Last year you elected a new Treasurer, Paul Still. It has taken almost a year to complete the handover, which involved many contacts with NatWest Bank via its web site, four banking centres and even by phone when able to bypass the computer that answers. Believing it to be completed we found that HM Revenue and Customs were still refusing to accept Paul.

My view is that the Group is in good heart, is being well run by the Leaders and is attracting many new Cubs and Scouts.

Treasurer's Report: Paul Still informed the meeting that due to the difficulties encountered in convincing the Bank and Revenue and Customs that he was now the Treasurer he had only obtained access to the current account bank statements for the past

year three weeks ago. As a family holiday intervened he had been unable to produce accounts in time for them to be inspected prior to this meeting. However, he listed the income and expenditure of the group, both of which were down significantly, with an income of £6,857 and expenditure of £6,813, a surplus of £44. He has only just received statements about our other accounts, but believes he may now sign cheques and claim Gift Aid on behalf of the Group.

The Chairman asked the meeting to accept this statement and to allow the Trustees to review the accounts when they had been produced and inspected. An email would be sent to those relevant persons when this was done. The meeting agreed to this.

Section Reports:

Group Scout Leader: Stephen Young told of the difficulties within the School caused by the pandemic. Working in IT he had been immersed in the need to run lessons on line, and also to keep attendances within year bubbles; these went on to affect the Cubs and Scouts in a similar manner. There had been some re-building taking place in the School which involved the loss of the garages where some of our equipment had been stored. This area is now a parking space for minibuses and we have new wooden storage buildings.

He went on to praise Matthew and Mel for their work, they having never missed a week during the past year. Training is going on for Young Leaders who have returned to the Group, and also for the new Scout Leaders who have joined us. His own progression towards his almost completed Wood Badge has been stopped by the time lost to Covid-19. Stephen said that more Leaders were always needed and welcome, but especially with the Cubs.

Scout Leader: Once again, the Matthew and Mel double act. Scout numbers will be 54 with the new joiners, but unfortunately this leaves ten without a place. Currently there are three Young Leaders, eight adult Leaders, including three at university and able to help occasionally, with additional help from the GSL and the Chairman. Later, in the Spring when the Cubs come up there will potentially as many as 70 Scouts!

Autumn term started with outdoor meetings held, with social distancing, at West Grove for six weeks, before moving back online. The term ended with a virtual Christmas party and Camp – sleep anywhere but in your bed. Spring term was run completely online with simple cooking, stop motion videos, silhouette puppet theatres, puzzles and break-out rooms. It was also the time when a small army was mobilized to prevent the closure of the Fairlop Outdoor Activity Centre, which we depend on for our boatwork.

Summer term saw Scouts canoeing, kayaking and paddle boarding, alternating week by week in their year groups. Summer Camp, the largest we have run with 30 Scouts, was at Ferny Crofts in the New Forest. Many activities were enjoyed with two hikes, one at night. During the summer holidays, Fairlop now being open, two sailing days were run to make up for the lack of sailing during the term. Leaders have also been busy gaining qualifications in paddling and as Dinghy Sailing Instructors.

A Gold Award Expedition will take place at the weekend, somewhat earlier in the year than usual. This will allow Scouts to complete it before the DofE Bronze expedition which the School has decided to run a year earlier than usual. It is hoped that next year we could be running it in conjunction with other Troops. In December the Cubs and Scouts will be staying

overnight in the Secret Nuclear Bunker in Brentwood, where we shall be joined by the other local Sea Scout Group, the 36th. EFS. Cold War games are to be expected.

Matthew finished by reminding the Committee of the need to progress the Sponsorship Agreement.

Cub Scout Leader: Beryl Sharma reported that she now has 25 invested Cubs, with eight new ones starting over the next two weeks. She is being helped by five Young Leaders, and her ACSL Deepa Menger. During the period when no face to face meetings were possible workbooks were emailed to the Cubs via their parents for them to work on at home. The Scout Leaders helped by including Cubs in many of their online activities. With some lifting of restrictions meetings were held for specific year groups. Happily, they are now able to meet together as one group.

Activities covered have been the Personal Challenge Badge and Athletics Activity Badge, Paddle Sports, Sailing and Time on the Water badges at Fairlop. Last weekend eight Cubs from Prep 2 camped at Tolmers Scout Camp Site and worked towards the Outdoor Challenge Badge. Later in the year the Cubs will be joining the Scouts in the Secret Nuclear Bunker and Winter Camp in February 2022. A hike in Epping Forest Is planned with parents invited to join in, and a sleepover at either the Natural History or Science Museum. As usual, Beryl ended by requesting additional help to run the Cubs.

Election of Officers and Committee: The Chairman explained to the meeting the Scout Association rule that allows only the GSL to propose a person as Chairman. He then resigned so that he could not be accused of blocking the position. Stephen Young proposed John Hasselgren as Chairman, to which the meeting agreed. The rest of the Committee, who are also Trustees, were re-elected *en bloc*. They are Matthew Balchin, Roy Francis, Mel Knight, Beryl Sharma, Paul Still (Treasurer), Steve Thirsk and Stephen Young. The position of Secretary, which the Chairman had been covering, is vacant due to the most recent edition of POR (Scout regulations) banning one person from holding both positions. The Committee will endeavour to find a suitable candidate.

Any other business: None.

The business of the meeting being concluded, the District Commissioner Colin Wreyford took the floor and told of the plans to merge the Epping Forest South and the Ilford Districts into a larger Redbridge District which would contain 33 groups. Mel Knight has already been asked to become Assistant District Commissioner (Scouts) and the new District would bring in an additional Sea Scout Group with the likelihood of the formation of a Sea Explorer Unit. Colin then proceeded to make four presentations. These were a five year service certificate to Mel Knight, certificates and cash awards from the Jack Petchey Foundation to Juliette Balchin and Zain Ashraf and a Chief Scout's Commendation for Good Service to John Hasselgren.

John Hasselgren.

16th. September 2021