



# HIGHAM WOOD

## Scout & Guide Group



# CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

## ON BEHALF OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES

It is my pleasure to be able to report on behalf of the Group the continuing story of success of the Higham Wood Scout and Guide Group. The Groups numbers have remained fairly consistent year on year and at present we currently have around 162 young people enjoying the fun activities and learning that the Group provides which is led and encouraged by a dedicated team of adult leaders, and supported by board of trustees.

We are particularly pleased that we have been able to restart our Rainbows who met for the first time since 'lockdown' after the February half-term. There are currently eight girls which will no doubt increase over time.

As parents you will personally know the activities that your child enjoys and I hope it will bring you pleasure to learn of the activities throughout the other sections of the Group.

The past year has seen all sections busy with very varied and challenging programmes. The Beavers who meet at Woodlands School have seen their numbers rise and have a very enthusiastic leadership team and they have a great time with many different activities both indoors and outdoors working for their badges and having fun.

The Brownie unit is running at full capacity and also runs some great activities. Brownies, Scouts and Guides alike have had visit from Lee Athwall, who is also now one of our local councillors. She heads up the FEAST Community larder at the Methodist Church and she was able to engage with our young people and explain what the team and the Church does to support those in need within our community. We hope that some of our young people will become involved as a result.

The Cubs have enjoyed two residential experiences over the past year. During weekly meetings the Cubs have enjoyed making hot air balloons, a visit from the RNLI for whom they have done some fundraising along with a host of outdoor activities.

The Guides have also been busy. A day trip to London to take part in the ICANDO London Challenge had an exciting twist when they were fortunate enough to be let into Trafalgar Square to see HRH King Charles III pre Coronation, who was visiting a charity event for disasters abroad. This delayed our Guides slightly so they did not quite finish the challenge but the reason why they didn't was a good one!

The Guides have also taken part in a "BE PREPARED" activity day which simulated coping in the aftermath of an earthquake. The girls were split into teams to represent a family and worked with others from all over London and the South East Region. Two of the 13th Guides were in the winning family for "Teamwork" and another two were in the winning family overall. Our Guide leaders are very proud of their achievements.

The highlights for our Air Scout Troop were camps in May and February and a week at the Kent International Jamboree during last year's School Summer holidays. More recently they have enjoyed two more Scout camps, one being their camp at Broadstone Warren and the County Air activities Camp not quite two weeks ago.

Chris Parker, our Air Scout Leader and two of the Scouts, have been chosen to represent Kent at the World Scout Jamboree in Korea this summer for which they will be departing very soon. We know this will be a once in a lifetime experience for them. The young people have worked extremely hard to raise the money for this trip and among the activities they helped organise were a quiz and a barn dance to help raise funds.

Our older Guide section, the Rangers, usually meet fortnightly and also have an active programme. Some took part in the "Monopoly Run" an competition where within the day they visited all the places in London that can be found on the Monopoly board. They had a great day. They have also enjoyed celebrating events such as the Chinese New Year.

Finally the Scout & Guide Band who are currently rebuilding the band as a result of new members joining and older members moving on. The band now has a smaller number of competent musicians but do have a lot of enthusiastic members that are working hard to be out performing and numbers are expected to grow again during the year.

All of the performances during this spring and summer were concerts as these give them more flexibility whilst still allowing the more experienced members to challenge themselves by performing solos and by playing in small ensembles. The focus now is to ensure that there will be a competent marching band for the Remembrance Day parade in November.

The band has also started to benefit from a connection with the Band of the Irish Guards based in London which has led to their Musical Director visiting Tonbridge to see our band at practice and in September they are planning to spend a day at their barracks performing with their band and finding out more about the life of an Army musician.

Planned events for this year have been, or are to be a Spring concert, a performance on Easter Sunday in Brighton,

Tea-Fest, in Tonbridge, The Tonbridge Coronation Big Lunch and the Tonbridge Community Fete and of course two church parades.

The achievements of all the young people in the group would not be possible without the dedication of all the leaders, whether they are uniformed members or part of the Executive committee who give up so much of their time to make sure that a challenging active programme is held in a safe environment. Once again we are indebted to the Methodist Church for the use of their wonderful premises and making us feel part of the wider Church family. We thank Sharon our Minister for the support she has given during her years here in Tonbridge.

We will miss her as she will be moving to Frampton Cotterell near Bristol where she is to take up her new ministry. We now look forward to welcoming Kirsty McGhee who will be our new Minister from September.