

# DC's Newsletter

## Autumn 2018

### Hi

Welcome to my first newsletter as DC. I should have written one ages ago but life has been busy.

Most of you know me. For those who don't: I have been involved in Winchester scouting for nearly 30 years, with 19 years as a Scout Leader and nearly ten as Group Scout Leader of the 3<sup>rd</sup> (The Worthies). As a youngster I went right through, starting in the Wolf Cubs (no Beavers then!), then they changed to Cub Scouts, Scouts, Venture Scouts and University Scout and Guide Club (where I met Christine), a few years off and then I became a Scout Leader.

This is meant to be a newsletter. It is not intended to be an information download. Unfortunately, it is a bit like that. Please keep me informed of good things that you are proud to circulate and I will try to add them. However, please also keep them flowing onto the District Facebook page. If you are not already a member then please also join the District Facebook group (Winchester Scouts); It is a closed page so you will need to apply.

### Commendables

Dave Kesby and co have been doing excellent work for a couple of years now with meetings on Saturday mornings for young people with special needs. They are now extending this with a new Scout Troop based at Osbourne School. Excellent inclusivity and right on the button.

Three members of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Winchester (The Worthies) Troop took part in a small but real sea rescue this summer. The Troop was in camp just north of Torquay and down on the beach, swimming in the sea (yes, permit requirements were met). Three other youngsters were paddling open-top kayaks past and had difficulties: the kayak with the eldest and youngest lads aboard capsized about 40m from the beach and beyond the rocks. They righted the kayak but couldn't board without capsizing again. Three of the 3<sup>rd</sup>'s stronger swimmers swam out, helped right the kayak again and held it steady while the two lads boarded. Our swimmers returned to the beach and kept the kayak under observation until it returned to the more populous part of the beach where the kayak hire company was based.

### District appointments

We welcome:

1. Mike Wilson as GSL of the 1<sup>st</sup>
2. Martin Nolan as GSL of the 4<sup>th</sup>
3. Stephen Parker as ADC (Growth and Development)

#### 4. Lisa Gibbons as District Development Officer

Stephen will be continuing to support and drive forward the growth and development of the District and has already been in contact with GSLs to set growth and development targets.

Lisa will be taking up the role of recruiting new Beavers and their parents as leaders, mainly through school visits and follow-up meetings with parents. She is starting with the 8<sup>th</sup>. This is the role that Vanessa fulfilled three or four years ago, leading to a much improved delivery of the 'more young people' part of the sound bite 'Better scouting for more young people'.

I'm sure that you will join me in wishing all four of them every success in their new roles.

There are still major vacancies for:

1. ADC (Adventurous Activities) – to coordinate and grow our range and quantity of adventurous activities, looking after the permit scheme and helped by a team of district activity advisors
2. ADC (Beaver Scouts) – coordinating (with others running) a range of District Beaver activities, supporting new colonies and looking at any issues in delivering the programme across the board
3. ADC (Cub Scouts) – coordinating (with others running) a range of District Cub activities, supporting new packs and looking at any issues in delivering the programme across the board
4. District Youth Commissioner – to assist in delivering 'youth shaped', must be over 18 and under 25 at appointment
5. A District media/publicity lead
6. A training course coordinator for safeguarding and first aid
7. Activity advisors / permit holders – major gaps on climbing, caving, mountain biking and air activities

If you are interested in any of these or would like to talk then please contact me

([dc.winchester@scouts-hants.org.uk](mailto:dc.winchester@scouts-hants.org.uk), 07803 959758). All roles are flexible and subject to discussion. Please also call if you have other ideas for how you could help at District level. Many District adults retain Group roles too.

### **District plan**

The DC's main role is to 'provide direction' to the District. At times this does get a little lost among the day to day matters such as appointments, permits and activity approvals. I still intend to discuss the District with the Groups and the District Team to identify what is good and what could do with improving. I expect that we shall continue with the sound bites 'Better Scouting for more young people' and 'Every young person in our area who wishes to take part in our activities can do so'.

This decomposes into several areas. Key to these is our great team of excellent leaders, managers and supporters. There are two specific aspects that we need to improve on here in order to both retain our existing levels of activities and to improve:

1. Numbers – we need more in order to support the volume of activities for young people. We need everyone to be ambassadors and encourage other people to come forward when you can.
2. Training validation – We know our leaders are amazing but can we prove it? Did you know that we have 420 adults in roles with training requirements? It's one thing being amazing, competent and excellent; it's another being able to show it. Within our system for providing safe and engaging activities are several requirements for competence validation (they are billed as 'training' but the marker is 'validation') within defined timescales. Many of our adults have overrun these timescales. We need to make our culture that of achieving validation within the timescales and preferably sooner.

There is a problem of what should we do with adults who don't complete their training in the timescales. They are effectively outside the rules.

In many cases there are misunderstandings. I have just been conversing with a leader who thought they had almost completed their wood badge and had a nights away permit. However, the record showed a provisional appointment with only module 10 (first aid) passed and that had lapsed (it's the only one that does). The leader has now met with a Training Advisor, validated several modules including those for gaining a full appointment and the nights away permit. Can I ask all of you to check your records on Compass and make sure that your training record is up to date? If there is a module shown as not validated that you think should be validated or should not apply to your role then talk to a TA and get it sorted.

3. First Aid, Safeguarding and Safety – all leaders should be up to date on validating or revalidating these without gaps. First Aid needs to be revalidated every 3 years and the other two every 5. We do have an issue with local first aid courses at present and we had an issue with this term's safeguarding course – however courses are available slightly farther afield and we are working on putting convenient courses in place.
4. First Aid for activities – given the lack of first aid validation in some areas, all activities must have an appropriate level of first aid provision. POR requires all adventurous activities to have qualified first aid provision in attendance. For other activities, including weekly meetings, I expect all your risk assessments to address the need for a qualified first aider to be immediately available and only justify non-availability in a small minority of cases (e.g. adult committee meetings).
5. GDPR training – General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) Training is a mandatory module for all appointments (occasional helper not an appointment, section assistants and scout active support members are appointments) by the end of the year. I've done mine

(just!). We (corporate) need all of us to have validated it before we get the glasses out on New Year's Eve and preferably much sooner. You only need to do the on-line course at [https://members.scouts.org.uk/training\\_module/GDPRwithcertificate/#/](https://members.scouts.org.uk/training_module/GDPRwithcertificate/#/) and present the certificate to a TA. The TA will create the GDPR training entry on Compass and record your certificate as validation.

## Other activities

I have been pleased to see a good flow of Nights Away Notification (NAN) forms into my inbox. I have replied to all of these, sometimes with immediate approval and sometimes with a few questions first. It's good to see the good level of activity.

I have also attended a number of AGMs. It is good to see the organised charity side of our operation in progress and be able to thank those behind the scenes for their great support. Please also remember to invite Richard (the District Chair) and myself to your executive committee meetings, when I wrote the 3<sup>rd</sup>'s quorum it included inviting the DC and District Chair 2 weeks in advance. However, do expect our apologies unless you have specifically asked one of us to come for a reason.

Regards

Robin

District Commissioner

Winchester District of the Scout Association

18th November 2018