

ROWBOAT
AGLIDING PARASCENDING
HALLS
BALL QUADBIKING GRAFT BUILDING ROWING SAILING
LLINGS SHOOTING SINGLE PITCH CLIMBING SKIING SNORKELLINGS SNOWBO
REETS SPORTS SUBAQUA SURFING SWIMMING WATERSKIING WHITEWATER RAFTIN
RFING ZORBING ABSEILING AERIAL RUNWAY ARCHERY BALLOONING BANDS BOUL

1ST HALTON SCOUT GROUP

AGM 24th Nov 2020



1st Halton Beavers

Report 2019 - 2020

The Beaver Colony has had a surprisingly eventful year! After an exciting winter term with Halloween party and Aladdin themed sleepover, we said a sad goodbye at Christmas to Sarah who had been the leader for the previous 7 ½ years. I'm sure we all agree that she did a fantastic job and has been sorely missed. I'm thrilled to say that after some deliberating and with William's and Katie's agreement to help as Assistant Leader/Section Assistant, I took over as Beaver Leader in January and we returned to meeting on 14th January with a small, but perfectly formed, colony of 11 Beavers. I am extremely grateful for the fantastic support from John and Akela, and from Mandy and Catherine from District for getting me started in my new role.

We met for just 6 sessions before the country went into lockdown, but in that time we managed to fit in a whole bunch of exciting activities including first aid, birdwatching, celebrating Chinese New Year and joining the Lonsdale District Beaver Sleepover for a fun overnight stay at Giggles with another 90 Beavers at the end of February.

We then took a short pause while we worked out how we could best continue with some Beaver Scouting activities during COVID restrictions and started sessions online using Zoom on 5th May. Sessions were attended by a core group of Beavers with their parents joining each session to support and we managed to complete gardening and reading badges, a special badge 'The Great Indoors' (Level 1) with activities including learning about recycling, making plastic from milk, baking cookies, growing plants, den building, scavenger hunts and quizzes. The summer term culminated in a digital summer camp 'The Great Indoors Weekender' with Beavers joining sessions running online, completing activities and challenges in their own time over the course of the weekend, camping out in their den or tent in the garden or house, a Colony cook along session with some of the Beavers cooking on campfires, and 1:1 zoom sessions with the Beaver Leaders. The effort made by both the Beavers and their families was truly outstanding. I would like to say an enormous **Thank You** to all the parents for supporting their children with the online sessions. It really would not have been possible without you.

With the lifting of some restrictions in September, we had every intention to return to a combination of socially distanced meetings and online sessions, with some new members joining the Colony. However, COVID had other plans and as the second wave hit, both William and I were struck down with the lurgy and we are currently taking a break until fully recovered. I've missed all the fun with the children and am looking forward to meeting again as soon as we can.



Cubs

The past year has been a challenge for all of us and scouting has suffered because of Covid. Back in September 2019 there were 20 cubs in regular attendance at Halton with myself and my son Robert as leaders. Our program was varied with activities and games for the cubs that covered a wide range of things such as a challenge night, two science weeks, a treasure hunt, an obstacle course, model making, cooking and baking, making puppets, Christmas craft, table games, air activities and communication. We completed several activity badges in science, entertainment, air activities and awarded some challenge awards too. But all the fun and games stopped suddenly in March 2020. We were the final section in the scout district to hold a meeting on 17th March, and we only ran because we'd finally managed to arrange a presentation of a chief scout's silver award that night to one of the cubs. Since that night the doors to the scout hut have shut and scouting for all sections has been very different.

Once lockdown first came in, Robert and I put together activity packs for the cubs which included activities, games, badgework, recipes, useful websites and a couple of leaders of challenges to keep them going with cub stuff for the next month and these were delivered to the cubs in April, May and June. With lockdown, schools and work places closing and getting very little response from any of the cubs, the activity packs were stopped as we decided that families had more important issues and challenges to contend with at the time within their own families.

In September we were all ready to start cubs again indoors, but before we could get going our meetings once again had to be abandoned as another lockdown was put in place. Robert re-hashed our scout group website, we set up a dedicated cub email and since October, Robert and I have been emailing out a weekly activity to the cubs and posting their achievements on the newly refurbished group website for all to see. However, having lost a handful of cubs who have either left or moved on to scouts, we are currently getting very few emails back from cubs saying the activity has been completed. I emailed all the cubs a few weeks ago found that we are now down to about 10 cubs who still want to be involved but the current lockdown has put additional pressure back on families and finding time to complete a cub activity is low down on their priorities which I fully understand.

Going forward, hopefully the end of 2020 and the start of 2021 will bring back face to face scouting as it used to be. We know there will be some changes for us all in how we run meetings and activities but we shall aim to carry on. We know things will be different and changes will have to be made to keep everyone safe, but the fun and friendship will still be there, the spirit of scouting has only been a little squashed in the past year and it will bounce back. In the meantime, keep well and stay safe.

Anne (Akela) 21/11/2020

Scouts

Well that was a year we won't forget in a hurry, but probably would like to. Scouting has been very different this year.

During the Autumn term the scouts completed their Skills challenge, which involved lots of exercise, different skills and problem solving. In November, 8 of the scouts took part in the Knight activity, and as usual thoroughly enjoyed it, and we didn't have any teams wandering off map this time. Unfortunately because of Covid this won't be taking place this year.

At Christmas we did our usual party at the scout hut and had all the games out in the hall.

In February a group of the scouts had a winter camp on the scout hut grounds, although only the first night was spent outdoors, as a storm was moving in so we moved into the scout hut for the second night.

At the start of the new year the scouts spent some time on Navigation and pioneering / knots and then spent some time finding out about a Finnish scout troop and making contact with them and exchanging letters. We were hoping to have a joint event online with them, but unfortunately our plans were scuppered when we went into lockdown because of Covid-19.

Since then, we haven't done anything in scouts. I've not been very good getting anything like Zoom meetings planned or getting out on those few sessions that we could theoretically have met outdoors. We were just planning some indoor meetings when Lancashire went into Level 3 and that was stopped.

I will do my best to try and get some Zoom meetings planned, however, I'm very much old school and I feel there is only so much badgework that as scouts we are able to do online. Also as a gardener I haven't stopped working at all through the pandemic, and have actually been busier than normal. Before the scouts are able to meet face to face, I have a lot of risk assessments to do. Hopefully, after Christmas when my work gets quieter I'll have more time to get on with these and planning some online sessions.

John

GSL Report

As I'm sure you'll appreciate, this year has been a very disrupted one. Covid-19 has had a massive impact globally and this is no different for scouting.

Beavers have been doing online Zoom meetings, Akela has been trying to get the cubs to do some offline activities at home with limited success, and the scouts haven't done anything. The constantly changing rules from the scout association haven't helped, with us being in and out of lockdown and various other levels of restrictions with every change affecting what we can and cannot do in scouting.

Going forwards I cannot see the situation changing in scouting before Christmas, and until Lancaster comes out of level 3 no face to face scouting will be allowed, indoors or out;

The Scout association themselves have been suffering significant financial challenges, they have had to furlough many staff and make many redundant. They are currently in the process of selling Baden Powell house in London and one of their Activity centres to try and stave off bankruptcy. This problem is likely to be exacerbated in February when they normally receive a large part of their income from annual subscriptions (capitation), which they expect to be significantly down.

They are asking that all scout groups continue to pay their capitation for the year ahead, for each group this is linked to the number of youth members they have on Jan 31st. This is why the scout association are so keen for each group to continue running sessions in any form they can, so that they lose as few members as possible by this date. We will need to ascertain by then how many children we have still wanting to continue in scouting, as we have to pay almost £40 per child. This covers all the services the scout association offer and the members insurance.

Money

We took part in the Christmas post last year which helped raise a few hundred pounds, but this year this has been cancelled.

The only thing that means we will remain solvent whatever happens this year is a significant grant we received from the government because we own our own building, are classed as a business (most charities are), and receive a business rate rebate.

We have also received money raised through the Co-op this year as one of the local charities chosen to receive a percentage of the sales from a local Co-op. We can thank Denise for putting us forwards this year. This money is earmarked for refitting the garage out as an air rifle range and can only be spent on this.

Volunteering

Volunteers are likely to be even more important going forwards, as when we do return to face to face scouting we are going to need more adult support as we have to cover all aspects of the Covid security measures. Lots of extra cleaning and managing of social distance among the children will be needed in the short term at least.

I would like to ask that everyone be patient with the section leaders at this time as they work out what they are doing for their meetings. There will be significant extra work involved in running any form of meeting during this time, and we are all still working full time and haven't been furloughed for any of it.

John Elliott (GSL and Scout Leader)

Executive Chair

I would like to thank all our volunteers, particularly the section leaders, for keeping everything ticking over during this challenging year and I am looking forward to a proper start-up of scouting activities next year as hopefully the situation will start to ease.