

District Commissioner's AGM Report

(End of Financial Year Report, November 2017)

Thank you all for coming to our Annual General Meeting. When I took on the role of DC, just over a year ago, I set out to learn as much as I could about all the Groups and Units in the District; find out about the leaders, our young people and what makes the Forest of Dean a success. It didn't take long before saw firsthand all the great things we offer our Young People every week and how well our leaders work together. Dedicated and enthusiastic are just two words I would use to describe them. Our young people were all keen and eager to join in, have fun and learn new skills. They must all talk positively about their experiences because our youth membership grow again this year to nearly 700 and our adult membership was also up by 24%. We also saw the opening of our newest group at Woolaston. Sections are strong and the young people are enjoying a vibrant programme.

One aim for me when I started was to build a District Team to support our leaders. We have ADCs for all sections plus activities and young leaders. We have new members on the District Executive Committee and now have an Awards Committee, led by Brian Wingfield, to ensure we recognise and reward any adult for all they do in Scouting.

Communication is always a challenge, particularly with some many ways of communicating available. The new website looks great, and gives anyone a central place to look for information, albeit a new family looking for their nearest group, to a leader needed a copy of the latest Oakleaf. We have two great Facebook pages, one to promote scouting to the wider world and the other as a place where leaders can share ideas and ask for help; both working very well.

Throughout the year, our young people have had so many opportunities within their sections but also as a district. From camps, sleepovers, a swimming gala, cooking competition, backwards skills, rifle shooting, disco, St George's Day parade, Big Bark art project, JOTA/JOTI and community service at Hearts of the Forest School, to name but a few.

It is also important for me to remind everyone on the huge success Cinderford Scout Group made in restoring their Scout Hut. The amount of time and dedication by all those involved was outstanding and they now have a great place to meet.

Scouting, however, does have its sad times. This year we lost George Hiscocks, Clive Bryant and David Hart. Strong dedicated Scouters who enriched Scouting and offered great support to others. We will miss them.

So what does next year hold for us? If we are to build on all we have achieved this year, then we are in for a great year. We must continue to develop and improve training, communication and offer more district events. This will promote and strengthen the important belief that I have, which is that we all belong to the Forest of Dean District, it is our district and we move forward together.

Thank you.

Gary Law
District Commissioner