

Notes from Group scout leader meeting held at DHQ on 7th April

Present, D. Wilkinson DDC and 53rd Lancaster, Pat Griffin, DC, Val Vose 11th Morecambe, Judith Duncalf Bolton le Sands, Sarah Cruickshank, 34th Lancaster, Helen Plumb, Caton Church, Darren Phillips, 23rd Lancaster, Jonathan Liver, 16th Lancaster.

Apologies from A Hague 16th Morecambe, Paul Sargent, 53rd Lancaster, Kieron Ryan, 35th Lancaster and Pat Armstrong ADC Cubs.

Minutes of last meeting were agreed as correct with no matters arising. Pat said these should be kept as a very good prompt for what form to use when and for all the useful website contacts.

St George's Awards - We congratulated the St George's recipients (too late to include them in the latest Newsletter). Derek Holt and Helen Plumb had been awarded Bar to the Silver Acorn, Terry Bond, Pat Griffin and Jim Holland had been awarded Silver Acorn. Also congratulations to 2 recent awardees of the Award for Merit - Pat Armstrong and Kieron Ryan. Very good news for Lonsdale.

Census - We discussed the census figures and whilst the overall figures are up, well done scouts and explorers, we are slightly down at Beaver level and more down in cub section. Where does this leave groups – are they needing help or support to increase numbers or is it natural progression from 1 section to others? We have 3 current projects and we can get more help from the County Development team. They will meet groups and their reps to help to search for more members or to canvass parents for leadership, to offer guidance to GSLs on planning for succession. So, if you have a problem and want help let Pat know and she can get authorisation of a project to give new life to your group.

Development plans - We discussed the relevant tools for the job as GSL. At the development day at Preston (poorly attended by Lonsdale) there were some good resources to help groups, sections and leaders. There are some pre-prepared development plans where you ask yourself the questions for sections or groups to identify the priorities moving you quickly to tackling immediate issues and showing you how/who to approach for further action. Pat can get you copies of these – let her know.

Welcome packs – does your group have one? Is it fresh and up to date? Does it include info re leaders, times of the sections sessions, reasons for the groups operating, behaviour policy, CRB form and gift aid? There are templates for these on www.scout.org.uk so you can prepare your own. It could be a parent in the group who is good at IT who does this – it does not have to be every job that falls on the busy GSL!

Gift Aid – We are losing money if we don't convert our subscriptions from members into gift aid repayments. Again you might have a parent in the group who could do this 1 thing for you if the Treasurer does not want to do it, but have you asked them and is it group policy to do this – has it been discussed at your exec meetings. Again a template for gift aid is on www.scouts.org.uk and a word doc explaining what to do. Peter Ellwood the district Finance Committee chairman is prepared to help any group with advice on setting up such schemes. His name is shown in the District Directory

District directory – new one will be out in next 2 weeks. It is printed and it being proof read for any mistakes or last minute alterations as people are changing roles all the time! It will come out in electronic format - you can download your own copy, or keep it in your computer, or it will be on the www.lonsdalescouts.org.uk website behind the password. Updates will be done twice a year. One new feature is at the back where all the meeting nights of sections are shown so you use this to arrange joint events, or visits for new leaders etc. Thanks to Jonathan Liver for all his hard work on this.

Awards – a) **adult awards** - Pat Presented Sarah with her confirmation of appointment as GSL or 34th and also as Media Manager (busy lady!). We also have Wood beads for Sarah for her Cub leader training, Steven Firth of 1st Carnforth as ASL, Jennifer Pye as ABSL of 16th Lancaster, Stephen Sargent as ASL at 53rd Lancaster, and Debra Thackrah as ASL at Bolton le Sands – well done to all. These will be presented soon at relevant colony, pack or troop nights by Pat or ADC section.

b) Young people's awards - We discussed Beaver bronze awards and cub silver. Do we want to make special District awards nights for these? The meeting felt Beavers were best on home territory with parents there if possible or at group AGM. Various views were put forward re past Cub silver award ceremonies, but concerns re costs of venues and whether parents prefer it to be local to own groups. We feel it is a special award and shows lots of work done by cubs and should be visibly rewarded. The meeting agreed to pass our thoughts back to ADC cubs for further discussion.

Festival of Scouting – Craig Dewar presented the meeting with an update of the arrangements (will be sent out to all GSLs), which contains a timetable of events, and a request for all groups to offer 1 base. The meeting discussed bases we could offer simply and cheaply which also showed good scouting to a wide audience. List includes, backwoods cooking, camp fire songs, knotting ,minipioneering/ballisters, mini hockey 5 a side, turks head woggles, bottle rockets information table. We would also like a larger pioneering project if possible. We discussed undercover tentage and agreed if anyone brought a tent it would have to go up on morning and be manned during service and daytime to be secure, and be taken down at end of day. If your groups would like to offer to man any of the above bases then please let Pat know (she will be ringing round anyway to seek volunteers). All groups present at meeting were intending to attend the Festival.

Training – reminder again re dates for Safeguarding 19th April at 7.30 at District HQ (you must tell Carolyn Blyth at blythcarolyn@gmail.com if attending so she has enough handouts). Next event is 19th May same time and venue.

New leaders – warrants not issued - Pat has gone through Tony Barker's list of unfinished/unvalidated names (about 35) and may ask some GSLs for updates on these – it may be an oversight that validation form not sent or that the person has not yet done training (supposed to do it in first 5 months). Please try to help us clear these queries. A list of validators who have done the module 25 training will be put on website soon under training heading so you can see who to contact if you need help in this area.

Group updates – each rep then told us what groups were doing at present – 11th Morecambe numbers much better since open night and seeking more cub leadership, and scout family camp planned for Spring Bank holiday, 34th Lancaster - Sarah has stepped down as ACSL but a student returned from Uni has filled this place, good camp last weekend, BLS all sections ok and group camp planned for later in year. Caton Church – 2 BSLs soon moving up to cub section so actively looking to fill places but maybe not as high beavers numbers as before, scouts very busy, concern that maybe badges being achieved too quickly in cubs and scouts, and will they run out of things to do! 23rd Lancaster SL needed but GSL rethinking tactics may look for a group of parents to share role, good cub camp. Group camp planned for later. 16th Lancaster 80 years, have designed a badge, looking for new chair due to ill health of previous one, 2nd cub pack better numbers. 53rd Lancaster – 50 years in 2012 badge competition in hand, beavers will be camping soon, and cubs away same weekend.

District AGM – is to be held in Lancaster Town Hall on 6th July and a presentation of the Nepal trip will be shown. We have a new President – Susan Reynolds of Leighton Hall, she has been invited to Festival of Scouting as well as AGM. We are hoping to say our Thank you to Peter Hewitt our retiring President at AGM.

Notes by Pat Griffin.