

Haughley Parish Council Report 2024

This year, we have a tale of two halves. Our Scout Group caters for over 70 local children, ranging in age from 6 to 14. We have a long waiting list, with some children added at birth. We are able to provide during term time, an evening a week of different activities using our Hall, Haughley Park and Gallowfields Wood. We will supplement these regular meetings with extra activities when we can, as we have volunteers who have trained to deliver kayaking, archery and climbing sessions. We also attend District events, and of course do not neglect our core camping skills and endeavour to arrange a Cub and Scout Camp each year. Last summer the Scouts revisited a favourite camp site on Jersey in the Channel Islands.

As a group we are solvent, indeed with help of volunteers we have looked after our funds prudently, and are fortunate to be able to rely on three regular fundraisers a year.

We should have everything going for us as a Group, but the irony is that we don't! To deliver these exiting programmes we need adult volunteers. We have a core of great people, but we struggle to attract the younger people who should be providing the continuity we need. Some of our volunteers are looking to retirement and we now face the very real problem that we will not have a Cub Pack by next September. This will destabilise the Group, both with the continuity of the scout journey, but also have an impact on our financial health with time. Unfortunately this is a widespread problem, and I understand that our near neighbour Elmswell has just lost both Cubs and Scouts. We are being approached to take extra children from these sections, and will do what we can to accommodate for as long as we can. The great volunteers that we do have end up doing far more than they probably should which is great, but this is unsustainable over time. This was particularly significant over last weekend, as we were involved with managing the car parking at Weird and Wonderful Wood, and really struggled to motivate enough volunteers from our group parents, and had to rely on old friends and some great help from the football community here. Of course there are responsibilities attached to supporting young people. The Scout Association takes this very seriously and provides training that has evolved to fit in with our busy lives and overall it is a very positive experience. We are doing our level best to support and encourage the very small contingent of parents that will help, and are mandating a responsibility that if a child joins the Group, a parent will get involved either at meetings or at fundraisers for a minimum of twelve hours a year in the hope that somebody will be brave and take on a more permanent role. It remains to be seen how the next year will evolve for our Group.

Thank you.