

25TH PURLEY (ST. MARK'S) SCOUT GROUP **HIGHLIGHTS OF THE YEAR 2019 – 2020**

As Bear Grylls, our Chief Scout says, “Put your phone down and what are you left with? Just teamwork, courage and the skills to succeed”.

For the period of this report, April 2019 through to March 2020, we have much to celebrate with another excellent year of multiple achievements alongside loads of fun, adventure and unique experiences led by a very experienced and amazing volunteer leader team.

A number of our young people received Jack Petchey Awards over the past 12 months for being outstanding achievers - we are very proud of them all.

The weekly meetings, special activities and camps that took place in 2019 / 2020 speak volumes about the spirit and true character of the 25th Purley (St. Mark's) Scout Group and all it has to offer in so many different ways.

The 25th Purley provides Scouting across all age ranges with a Beaver Colony, Cub Pack, Scout Troop, Young Leaders and a volunteer adult Leader Team.

Our Highlights have included the following:-

- **St. George's Day Parade at St. Mark's in April 2019** with a joint service celebrating the Patronal Festival followed by lunch.
- **Our volunteer Leader Team gave additional time** to attend a 3 yearly first aid course in May and a skills afternoon at Park Farm in June as part of their leader training. They also attended a District meeting at the Scout Hut in June where I am delighted to confirm that the district approved their appointments as Assistant Leaders and in Jo's case, Beaver Scout Leader. Congratulations to Jo, Fiona Kinnaird, Andrew, Alex, Kritin, Gill and Emma. Alex and Kritin also applied for a “nights away” permit which enables them to organise and lead “nights away” ie camps and I am pleased to confirm that they passed with flying colours! They join Kerr, Adele and me in being able to lead “nights away” for our young people.
- **Completion of the Scout Hut Garden Project in June 2019 thanks to Jon and Rachael Hoare and our Beavers and Cubs.**
- **Longridge was again a sell out as a post exam camp in late June** with record numbers camping on the island in dry, warm weather and enjoying a wide range of water activities with paddle boarding and shooting the weir two of the most popular activities.
- **Park Farm summer evenings - all 3 Sections enjoyed many a happy evening at our favourite local camp site.**

- **Blackland Farm Cub and Scout Summer Camp.** The weather may not have been on our side this year but our Cubs and Scouts were an outstanding group of young people and had a fantastic time thanks to our magnificent volunteer Leader Team. Special thanks goes to Alex and Kritin who organised, led and managed Summer Camp with the help and support of Adele, Fiona, Jo and Callum, Nigel, Colin, Alex Beal and Matt, our chef. It is literally hundreds of hours of volunteer time that goes into organising this camp. The food was superb - thanks to Matt - and the programme (with some great new activities) was brilliant.
- **The launch of our new web site in October with “My25th” being a new way of doing things.** Thanks goes to Kritin, one of our Assistant Scout Leaders, for designing, building and launching such a brilliant site for us.
- **Remembrance Sunday – another wonderful turnout.** We were honoured and privileged to have Ron Dowling, DFC, grandfather of one of our former Scouts; President of the 25th Purley and 96 years young to lay our wreath. Ron is much loved and an inspiration to us all.....
- **November / December highlights** included the return of our shooting club; taking part in the County Shooting competition where we came second overall and our Cubs and Scouts working hard and having fun earning their Emergency Aid Stage 2 and 3 badge – a vital life skill. The Cubs made the Christingles as is tradition and we enjoyed a service that is a firm favourite with people of all ages. All Sections finished the term with a Christmas Party.
- **THE Jumble Sale, a record breaking £4,075 raised on the day.** Scouts help others and we were delighted to be able to support a number of local school libraries, Oxfam, Crisis, an animal rescue centre and several other local charities / good causes too.
- **Winter Camp February 2020.** Another very happy and successful winter camp despite Storm Dennis and some challenging driving conditions on the Sunday morning to and from the trampoline park! 27 young people enjoyed fantastic food thanks to Matt and amazing activities at Blackland Farm and also off site. The camp was led and run by 10 members of the Leader Team – all of whom are volunteers. Well done everyone!
- **In March, the virus arrived and the world changed.** Our Beavers, Cubs and Scouts could no longer meet face to face nor could we go to St. Mark’s as planned for Mothering Sunday.

- **In April, we returned for the start of the Summer Term virtually using Zoom pro.** We received fantastic feedback from our parents and young people. To know that we made a difference and that our young people had fun each week was great to hear. We tried very hard to run the meetings on the same day and time each week so that our young people remained in a Scouting routine. A massive thank you to Alex and Kritin, our tech experts and Assistant Scout Leaders, who made the zoom meetings happen so professionally and successfully and to Magpie, Bagheera and Baloo who supplied the ideas and ran the meetings with Kerr, me, Alex and Kritin and made them such fun and so worthwhile. You are all stars!
- **Our weekly Challenges!** Each week all three Sections were given a FUN challenge to complete with the results posted on our social media feeds and web site and included in the weekly slide show – part of each meeting.
- **After the Summer holidays,** we returned in September for the Autumn Term virtually using zoom again but with the added bonus of being able to meet face to face at Park Farm, Banstead Scouting's Scout Camp Site, on two Sundays – the first at the end of September and the second at the beginning of December. They were both very happy and successful days with all our Beavers, Cubs and Scouts invited to take part. They were able to meet their 25th Purley friends again, have fun, play games, be out in the fresh air and enjoy food around the campfire.
- **For the Spring Term 2021,** we have returned again virtually for now, but very much look forward to the time when we can all meet again face to face outdoors at Park Farm. Although Winter Camp is cancelled, we still have Longridge, our water activities weekend camp in June in the diary along with Summer Camp in August at Blackland Farm. We will have to wait and see if either of these are possible. The good news is that we have booked our camps for 2022 and Kandersteg, Switzerland for 10 days in August 2024!

Thank you to our outstanding and amazing volunteers.....

Scouting at the 25th Purley simply would not be possible without the commitment and dedication of our volunteer Leaders, Helpers and Supporters. We would like to record our thanks to our adult Leader Teams in Beavers, Cubs and Scouts; to Alex Beal, our Chair; our Treasurer, Rakesh, our Membership Secretary, Kay and to all those who serve on our Group Executive Committee supporting the Scout Group as a whole. All our Leaders and Helpers give outstanding service to Scouting in our local community and we hope that they will continue to do so for many years to come.

One of the reasons for our continued success is that we work across our Sections and deliver Scouting as a Scout family. The highlights of 2019 / 2020 demonstrate this.

We cover for each other, we help each other and we look out for each other. We never ask an adult volunteer to do more than they are comfortable doing in terms of giving their time and we never ask someone to carry out a role that they cannot do happily and successfully nor for longer than they are able to do it.

St. Mark's Church, our church family

We are sponsored by St. Mark's and are proud to carry their name. We play a full and active part in all aspects of church life from helping to run the family services to encouraging support for the floating shelter and special church events. We bring families and adults to St. Mark's - there are over 70 families at the 25th Purley - and we take part in the important occasions in the life of the church such as the joint Patronal / St. George's Day Parade Service and lunch in April 2019.

Thank you to St. Mark's for providing us with somewhere to meet and for their help, support and encouragement throughout the year - with special thanks to **the Rev. Fiona**.

Finally, thank you to Kerr and Mum. Kerr is always there when I need him and I value his wise counsel with all things Scouting at the 25th Purley. Mum has served the 25th Purley in many roles for over 40 years - as secretary, as a member of the group executive and as a Vice President. She is always there with a kind word, loads of encouragement and words of wisdom. Thank you Kerr and thank you Mum.

Barbara McKinnon, "Akela" and Group Scout Leader.