**1st Cobham Scouts AGM**

**Thurdsday 30th September 2021**

**Zoom online conference, 8.00pm**

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| Attendees: |  |
| Nathan Menke | Assistant Scout Leader |
| Dylan King | Assistant Scout Leader |
| Rachel MacArthur | Cub Leader |
| Pat Berton | Group Chair |
| Anita Snell | Hall and Bookings Manager & Assistant Cub Leader |
| Rachael Miller | Group Secretary |
| Debbie Coles | Fundraiser |
| Lisa van Koetsveld | Group Treasurer |
| Mark Aulds | District Commissioner, Esher District |
| Lisa Cross | Group Secretary, District |
| John Bell | Group Scout Leader |

Steven Woods - Coveham Lodge

Apologies: Chris Grimble, Scout Leader and Helen Amys, Beaver Leader

1. **Welcome by the Chair, Pat Berton**

Can I extend a “virtual” but warm welcome on behalf of 1st Cobham to all our parents, scouts , adult volunteers and friends and can I add a special welcome to Mark Aulds , District Scout Commissioner, who is representing our parent District, Esher District Scouts, and Lisa Cross the Secretary of Esher District Scouts

A lot of what has happened or not happened in the last two years in scouting has been shaped by the pandemic and once again on balance we felt it was appropriate to run our AGM online, rather than going for our traditional “face to face” format. However we very much hope in Summer 2022 we will once again be able to welcome our scouts, their parents and carers and all our leaders and other volunteers into the scout hut, offering everyone teas coffees, something to eat and a glass or two of wine.

Meanwhile we will work through the normal agenda. Can I ask that we take questions after the Elections before we close the meeting, please put your hand up at that point or alternatively place your question online during the meeting.

1. **Minutes of 2020 Meeting**

First, I confirm that the minutes of the 2020 AGM, as presented on the Group website, represent a true record of last year’s AGM and these are now formally signed off having received no other comments.

1. **Chairman’s Statement**

Although this AGM strictly covers our last financial year 2020, we are nearing the end of 2021 so we will both report on that year but bring you right up to date.

2020/21 has been really difficult for scout groups but our leadership team have done a tremendous job as we have gone on into to 2021 organising virtual scouting once again during lockdown and since then progressively bringing the group back towards full face to face scouting. Rachel and the leaders will report on this in a minute. On behalf of all of us including the parents can I sincerely thank all our leaders for their commitment through the year to keeping the Group strong and fronting up the programme week after week especially in pretty gloomy and depressing times last winter.

Behind the leaders that parents and scouts see week after week, our Executive Committee works on the admin, fundraising, the hut and grounds, and general governance of the Group. Let me go round the Exec.

Jon Bell our longstanding Group Scout Leader stood down in June having stayed on an extra two years to support the Group through the pandemic. Thank you, Jon, for this and we hope you will stay involved in some way! I am pleased to report that this week Rachel MacArthur, Akela, has agreed to take on the role of acting Group Scout Leader.

Once again finances are sound. Pressures on membership subscription income from falling scout numbers and reduced revenue from hall hirers due to lockdown-related hall closures have been offset by support grants offered by the government via Elmbridge. Thank you, Lisa, for keeping us on track and helping us get the necessary applications in. This meant that that through 2020 /21 once again we could fulfil all the Leaders’ plans and any requests for necessary kit as well as continuing the ongoing improvements to the Scout Hut at Hogshill Lane. We feel comfortable with maintaining our termly subscription at £45 for this school year which we feel represents good value for money. Other groups charge are in the £50/£55 region as Mark commented so we are good value in Cobham.

Huge thanks to Anita Snell who has supported the Group in so many ways over the years, Anita continues to manage our hut hirers, recruiting new ones, and organising the day to day checking and hall cleaning in her role as Hall and Bookings Manager. And thank you for also putting a uniform on and helping as ACL in Cubs.

Thanks too to Derek Elsley for his many contributions to the maintenance of the hut and grounds, for planning and bringing off many of the recent improvements. Derek has been for a good while our go-to handyman but will now be standing down from his role as Maintenance Adviser.

Despite the pandemic we have maintained serious momentum on maintenance and improvement of the facilities at the scout hut. Last summer we repainted and repaired the entrance lobby and toilet area and the kitchen, as well as other interior woodwork in the hall. We also repainted the exterior front gable and put the new sign up there above the porch which will advertise the Group better and highlight a key message: that 1st Cobham has been providing fun and adventure to local young people since 1910! We replaced the fencing on the left-hand side of the front garden. We have done a lot of clearing of old debris and rubble from the front and sides of the hut also. We are grateful to the Allum family on the right-hand side who replaced their boundary fence. We also have a decent new gate on order which should be ready for installation in mid- November. We are planning to repaint the exterior walls and brickwork.

Next, Rachael Miller, a dedicated 1st Cobham parent, who has kept the wheels of the Executive Committee turning smoothly in her role as Hon Secretary. Rachael has also been marshalling our volunteering activities as Volunteer Coordinator, which has been a pretty difficult thing to do during a pandemic. She will be standing down from that role. We will now consider what additional support Rachel MacArthur will need as acting GSL. The Group needs to keep refreshing itself and we are committed to welcoming new volunteers either as new Leaders or Assistant leaders, or for specific roles connected with building maintenance, finance, and fundraising. We are an entirely voluntary organisation and depend totally on the enthusiasm and commitment of a small number of volunteers.

1st Cobham has always been active in the local community, supporting events and raising funds. This has been hard to maintain in the last year with the key parades in the village (Remembrance Sunday and St George’s Day) having been cancelled, along with the Cobham Christmas Parade and Extravaganza, Village Day and Waitrose bagpacking where the group has been active and visible. This has made fundraising hard but our longstanding fundraiser, Debbie Coles has kept the cash register ticking along very effectively in the background.

1st Cobham is one of the longest established Scout Groups with history going back to 1910. Our former Akela Alyson Menke researched a wonderful Memories Book including her research into 1st Cobham’s history, personal scouting stories and memories of scouts and volunteers, and many fantastic photos. This was part of our Centenary celebrations in 2010. This is now loaded onto the website and I would all urge everyone to delve into the Memories Book downloadable at: www.cobhamscouts.org.uk/history

I would now like to hand over to Rachel MacArthur our acting Group Scout Leader.

1. **Annual reports from the GSL and Scout Leaders:**

**Rachel MacArthur incoming GSL & Cubs Section Leader**

This has certainly been another challenging year all round for our group due to the pandemic but hopefully we are now coming out the other side despite some ongoing restrictions! I would like to start by saying a massive thank you to Andy, Derek and especially Anita for their support in helping to run the pack and getting the cubs through a number of badges. Anita (who has been involved in the Cobham Scout Group for about 20 years and has constantly been asked to go into uniform and this year I succeeded and she is now one of the leaders with cubs as well as her role with hut bookings, and our scout group shopper)

Also, a huge thank you to Judy, Bethany and Kara who have come along each week as scout helpers and are now embarking on their young leader training. We have also had a number of Duke of Edinburgh students helping us which has been fantastic.

Throughout all of last year and some of this year we continued to run zoom sessions for the beavers, cubs and scouts each week and undertook a whole variety of activities, including crafts, cooking, map reading, quizzes, and completed a number of badges which certainly challenged both the kids, parents and leaders. We also had the St Georges Parade and Remembrance Day parades online. We continued to support the local hospitals at Epsom, Royal Surrey and St Peters with food boxes for the nurses which were most appreciated as well as the Helping Hands charity with food boxes for families in need in Cobham. Thank you to all those who supplied donations for us. We also had a competition with the kids online to do an image of lockdown which we put onto mugs and gave all the members one to keep.

We were all thrilled when we were allowed to return to face to face scouting in April. We treated those beavers and cubs that had been online with us to a Ringo session at Sandown Activity Centre which was very well received, and they had a great time.

We have been very thankful and fortunate since our return to face to face scouting to have had the opportunity to use Avorians Cricket Club which has been invaluable at having the children outside and able to burn off energy, and experience the outdoors and we have achieved a number of badges throughout the year. We maintained the Covid restrictions and safety as much as we could and apologies for insisting on providing the weekly Covid Individual Risk Assessments. I really can’t believe that we didn’t have a single Wednesday meeting when it rained or a single Covid case during the meetings!

Many of you may have noticed the Defibrillator attached to the wall outside the Scout Hut which was fundraised by the scouts prior to lockdown and the difference in cost made up by the Cobham Chamber of Commerce which was very gratefully received. We initially were having it installed inside the hut but on discussion with the ambulance service with which it is now registered we purchased an outside casing for it to be available at all times.

We managed to maintain most of our cubs during lockdown and have moved a shuffle round of the groups with a number moving up to scouts and have had a number join us from beavers as well as being delighted to welcome a number of new children to scouting which has been great and they have adapted very well. We are now almost at capacity with the group and can’t believe we may have to start a waiting list as we are continuing to get interest for children to start.

We have now moved back to the scout hut and have an exciting term planned and have every finger and toe crossed that we will finish with the annual pantomime which all sections and families are welcome to attend. Further information to follow shortly. We also have a number of district cub competitions over the next few months which we hope to be involved in

I would like to end by saying a big thank you to Pat, Jon (who will be greatly missed!), and the leadership and executive team both within 1st Cobham Scout Group but also Esher District who have been very supportive in helping the leaders when necessary but most importantly all the parents and cubs for adjusting to the new regulations we have had to abide by but they have all been fantastic and a pleasure to have each week.

**Chris Grimble: Scout section report (presented by Rachael Miller)**

The year started off well with a number of face to face meetings at Avorians Cricket club before unfortunately being forced back online as the November lockdown started. This unfortunately meant at the last minute we had to cancel our annual fireworks night. However, we had a number of cubs join us over the Autumn term and along with a number of new scouts our number remained good over the winter, even though we could only meet on Zoom.

We managed to restart face to face meetings at Avorians Cricket club from easter and the scouts enjoyed being outside and able to meetup for the first time in some months. We also returned to meeting in the hut halfway through the summer term. It was nice to be back there for the first time in over a year.

So far this term we have managed to finally get away camping and although it was only to Walton Firs which is just down the road, hopefully this gets us back into the habit of running weekend activities. Something which has been missing for the last 18 months.

Unfortunately, although number remained high during lockdown and our zoom meeting we have had a large number who have decided not to return this term. We are down to 13 scouts but 4 of those are about to move on in the next few weeks, hopefully to explorers and/or the young leader program.

Conversation around the Scout numbers: We have had a number of families leave the area, some of the children are now older and due to finish. We have a number of Cubs due to move up at Christmas so we anticipate the group will be replenished.

**Helen Amys: Beavers Colony Report (Presented by Rachael Miller)**

Going back to 2020, as everyone knows, we had to stop everything in March due to the pandemic.  
We resumed in September 2020 joining with the Cubs at the Avorians Cricket club  for the Autumn term.

We then started Beaver zoom meetings in January 2021 which were reasonably successful, we had 5 current Beavers and 5 new ones, during which we completed several Activity badges and  parts of our Challenge badges as well as fun activities such as Chinese New year, volcano making and mixing oil and water to see what happens!!

We moved to socially distanced face to face meetings at our Hut in April 2021, starting with outside games on Leigh Hill.

We then moved into the Hut (still socially distanced) to resume usual Beaver activities such as Crafts, Healthy eating, marshmallow toasting and lots of games and exercises.  We ended the term with our usual party.

This term we have 20 Beavers with 5 new ones started, we are concentrating on Challenge badge activities such as crate stacking, water games, sand sculpting and welly throwing!!

Finally I would like to say a big thankyou to my assistant leaders, Brian ( my son) who comes every week, even making his day off from work Mondays so that he can help and Andy Dickson who comes to help especially as we have his daughter, Faith as a Beaver at present.  Thank you both.

1. **Thank you and awards:**

Mark Aulds: I’d like to say a huge thank you to Jon, who despite handing in notice back in 2019 carried on for another 2 years. We particularly really appreciate that when it came to the crunch he stepped up. Last night we dropped a present around as a thank you.

We have arranged for Jon to have a Chief Scout Commendation Award for 15 years of dedication, hard work and enthusiasm for Scouting. THANK YOU, JON!

Mark has a number of awards for the leaders, a very well done to them all:

5 Years’ Service Award: virtually presented to Dylan

5 Years’ Service Award: virtually presented to Rachel

5 Years’ Service Award: virtually presented to Nathan

15 Years’ Service Award: virtually presented to Helen.

Well done to Helen and big thanks in her absence. Mark will pass these awards to Rachel to give out to the other leaders asap.

A huge thank you to all the leaders, especially during lockdown when doing a zoom was one of the only ways the children were seeing each other. Another big thank you

1. **Fundraising Report - Debbie Coles**

Doing any fundraising was has been very hard due to Covid. We started the year with the expectation that we’d run our usual activities but then March 2020 came and everything stopped.

It wasn’t just about raising money, but it was also going out into the wider community to say we are 1st Cobham and we are here to support the community – but all events were cancelled This meant no Festival of Lights, no St Andrews fairs, no Heritage Day. We usually run the Festival of Lights which is a massive event and it all stopped.

However, in better news, other fund-raising support came through from the council and grants which helped cover the lost fund raising opportunities. We also looked at how we could get money back into the group. We have now missed 2 heritage days so it’s 2 years of impact. Thankfully, we had a £1,000 donated so we’ve had some money coming in.

Now we are starting to focus on Gift Aid and asking parents to note gift aid on the subs payments as that will help us reclaim some money via that route. The hope is that 2022 will allow the return of more normal activities for fundraising.

Joining us this evening is Steve Woods from Coveham Lodge. They have very kindly donated £1,0000 to 1st Cobham.

Steven Woods: We are delighted to be helping the Cobham Scout Group. It’s our centenary this year. Covid has delayed some activities and our cheque has been delayed but it’s now ready and will be delighted to present it at some point soon. We are interested in helping our local scout group. In the group at Coveham Lodge we have a Queen Scout and 2 former Scout Leaders, so we have a long tradition in the lodge with Scouting and we are more interested these days in focusing on very local charities. We support at the Surrey level and national, but we are keen to strike up a relationship with Cobham Scouts and continue to support where we can.

Pat thanked Steve on behalf of the meeting for the Lodge’s kind support

1. **Treasurer’s Report Lisa van Koetsveld, Group Treasurer.**

Total cash in the bank is £19,000 at end of December 2020.

Money received from subs, rent, grants. We didn’t take as much in from subs as we charged parents less during lockdown and numbers of children in the Group were down.

The accounts have been audited by Barry Hitchens, the District Auditor.

Pat proposed that the 2020 accounts are true and fair a show of hands concluded that is true.

Pat proposed that the 2020 annual report is true and fair a show of hands concluded that is true.

See attached.

1. **Election of officers and the committee**

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| Function | Person | Nominated by | Seconded by |
| GSL | Rachel | District\* |  |
| Chair | Pat | Rachel | Debbie Coles |
| Secretary | Rachael | Pat | Debbie Coles |
| Treasurer | Lisa | Pat | Rachael Miller |
| Bookings & Hall | Anita | Lisa | Pat Berton |
| Fund Raiser | Debbie | Anita | Rachael Miller |

\*GLS is appointed by District

We must ensure that we draw a clear line between leaders and the exec. We must ensure that the leaders when they join Exec meetings that it’s noted that they are co-opted into the Exec for that specific meeting.

1. **AOB:**

Nothing raised.

1. **Date of next meeting**

**TBC**