

Chairman's Report 2012-13

I have been with 1st Swindon Sea Scouts for just over a year now and I have thoroughly enjoyed my time and experience both as Chairman of the group, and also as an active member of our Beaver section. But I now feel that my "Scouting path" follows a different route, and with this in mind I have decided to step down as Chairman so that I can become more involved with our Beaver section, with the view to becoming a future Leader.

Moving on, it has been both a busy and eventful year with new members joining the Group, and our Group continues to thrive with all sections close to capacity.

I would like to personally thank all our Leaders, assistants, and other helpers, both for their enthusiasm and tireless effort that make the group a stimulating and interesting environment for all our young people.

On a financial note, as usual, the annual Christmas stamps sales was a great success, and everyone worked hard to get them all delivered in time for Christmas. This event is a very important fundraiser for the group and goes a long way to funding our everyday group running costs, and I would like to thank everyone who gave up their time to sell, sort or deliver, to raise these funds. This is the key fund raising event of the year and the more volunteers we get to run it, the more income we receive to invest in activities for our young people.

This year we have also submitted some grant applications to supplement our income. And a notable example is a grant from Trinity House for £3000, which has enabled the group to purchase two extra boats for our sailing fleet and also replace some much needed safety equipment. However we do still need to continue to focus on the group being financially stable so it is vital that all subscriptions are paid up-to-date, most parents have now taken the proactive step of setting up a standing order to ensure this happens and I would like to urge others parents to consider this option for future payments.

Our advertising through the Haydon Wick Parish Council newsletter has produced many enquiries to join us and, of course, many join through word of mouth. However, leaders, Executive members and helpers are always moving on, and we need to continue to attract new blood. In order to keep all the sections running, we need more people to come forward so I want to take this opportunity to ask all parents to consider giving up some time to build on our great success. This could be by becoming a Leader but can also be as a helper, member of the Executive Committee or a volunteer to support events such as the Christmas Scouts Post. Please do ask one of the Leaders or Executive Committee members how you can get involved. Also we continue to 'grow our own' with more young leaders stepping up to the plate, and we thank them for their efforts to support the Scout movement in this way. We offer full training, which is vital to ensure that everyone is appropriately qualified and equipped to keep our young people safe. Training does cost money but it is an essential overhead for the organisation. Training is paid for by the group if people want to become a leader, Scouting does not cost leaders anything for training just time.

Whilst the Executive Committee is keen to keep subscriptions as low as possible, the Group cannot rule out an increase in fees. There are no current plans to increase fees but the Executive Committee does have a statutory duty to ensure that the organisation remains in a financially healthy position.

The Executive Committee has decided that The Wick should remain as our base for the foreseeable future, but for many years it has always been a key ambition of the group to improve this vital facility. And with this in mind, this year we have now set up a buildings committee, with a long term plan to improve both the building and its facilities. We have now had building plans drawn up and are now in the process of submitting these plans for planning permission.

Obviously once the building plans are approved, completing this mammoth task will require some innovative fund raising and hard work by the group, but we all feel this task will be a

great long term group objective, as once completed, it will allow 1st Swindon Sea Scouts to carry on supporting the local community for many years to come.

Our records held by the Charity Commission are up-to-date and they can be viewed on their web site at www.charity-commission.gov.uk by entering our number 305941.

Finally, Simon who for many years has been a very active member of the group and is now going to be your new Chairman Elect, and I would like to wish him every success with his team in the coming year.

Alan - Chairman, 1st Swindon Sea Scouts