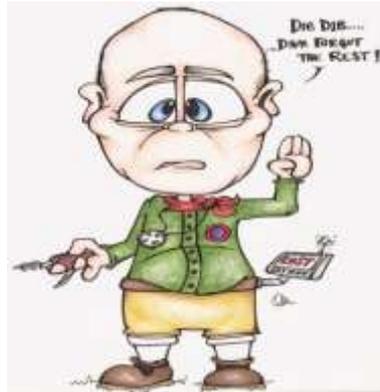


Group Scout Leader
4th Newbury (St Johns) Scout Group



AGM 2012

Firstly a huge thank you for coming today and supporting your group and the young people within it.

So is it possible anybody here does not know who this bald, loud, svelte figure of a person in front of them now is!! Let's face it I've never been known for being shy.

To perhaps our newer parents and members I'm Nigel and I'm the Group Scout Leader, posh title so what does that mean! Ah a Manager! We've all seen them, the one that sits at the back pulling strings and telling people how it should be done. Well to a degree yes. I am responsible for the group as a whole and everyone in it. Hopefully making sure that all the members young and not so are enjoying scouting and getting the most out of it while operating within the rules of scouting in a safe environment. Of course the down side of a job like this is the buck ultimately stops here. Those who know me well and have seen me around the group also know that I just can't sit back like that, some say I'm more of a hands on GSL others say I like to be involved but really most say that I like to interfere.

Personally I just do not like to miss out on the fun. The serious point is that if you ever need to discuss anything related to the group or scouting and for whatever reason feel that you can't approach a section leader or committee member then I'm the person you need to be talking to.

These AGM / Reviews do end up just being one list after another of great events and activities, especially around this scout group and sometimes I know it feels like you have heard it all before. But I think it's important that we realise at the moment young people in West Berkshire, probably have a better chance than ever through organisations like scouting, guiding, boys brigade etc to learn about and become valued members of the society around them while having a huge amount of fun in the process.

I'm sure they all come home raving and shouting about all the fun and exciting activities and sometimes perhaps miss the value and point of some of what they see as the slightly more boring or dull items. Don't get me wrong I love the fun events best as well. However the scouting program is structured to give them a balance of learning and fun and the chance to perhaps work in peer groups slightly outside those they would find elsewhere. With everything they do working towards developing them a good citizens and valued members of the community around them.

Of course none of the great things you have heard about them doing and the rather exciting ones coming up in the next 12 months are possible without the fantastic time and effort put in by the Leaders and supporters of the sections and group. You have had Kate, Gerard and Bruce tell you about what the young people have been up to and it is thanks to them and the rest of the leader team that all these activities happen. We are exceptionally lucky at 4th Newbury that we have a balance of very experienced (Some very very old!!) leaders and then new fresh leaders coming in with more up to date ideas to balance out the traditional scouting items. We have had now for some years a strong stable leader team which I feel has reflected in the achievements of the group and the young people that have come through. That does not mean we are not open to new faces as already mentioned we have had a few new leaders over the last 24 months which has brought us a great deal of flexibility in the program we can offer you could be next just put your hand up. It's perhaps worth mentioning that leaders do not just arrive "readymade" like a microwave meal. Although some do come through scouting others arrive full of the most important ingredient to us— **enthusiasm**. They then commit to undertake training and learning in order to ensure they are able to deliver the type of scouting we all like to see. So as well as the times you see them on a Monday or at an activity they also give up a considerable amount of time for training and development this includes on-going learning for established leaders – because you can really teach them to suck eggs. So a huge thank you to all our leader team.

For me what has been a very pleasing but of my first 10 months or so as GSL has been seeing how many of our young people who joined a while ago as Beavers a have moved through the group and now gone on to be Explorer Scouts in district and even more pleasing a number of them becoming young leaders working in various other groups and passing on the skills they have developed to more young people and leaders. What I also find great about the young people who come through scouting at 4th is walking through town they are all happy to stop and speak to you or acknowledge you without any embarrassment or worry as to how it looks to their mates etc.

Some of you will be aware that as a group we closed our waiting list quite some time ago and have been struggling to find spaces for all those who had already registered interest to join. The good news is that a **limited waiting list is now re-opening for Beavers** as we have managed to move a number from our list into either our group by slightly increasing numbers or other groups around the Kennet District. Where at all possible we have always endeavoured to make sure every young person has been offer a space at a Scout group in the area if it has not been possible for them to join us.

Those of you who have ventured beyond the door of the hall and seen the amount of space we are working in will I'm sure appreciate why we can't just flood more young people in. There is of course the Health and Safety restriction but also the matter of ensuring quality scouting for our members.

We have looked at the option of opening further sections within the group but restrictions of hall availability and the fact that at present spaces have come available at other groups, means this is currently held to review at a later date. We continue to be victims of our own success and still have no need to actually look to recruit young people as they are literally banging on the door to get in. As I have already commented on, we will always do our best to find every young person who wants to join a space at a Scout group but can't guarantee it will always be with 4th. What we will not do is take people into the group or onto a waiting list with an offer of a space and scouting that can't be delivered. As pretty much the whole of the District is run to a similar high standard I have no worries about the young people we pass on and that they quality scouting. We do however try to ensure that once a young person joins 4th as a Beaver they have the chance to stay with 4th right through to the end of scouts despite the pressure this puts particularly on the scout troop. It's simple maths 2 years in Beavers 2 years in Cubs 4years in scouts means Scouts often has a bottle neck with regard to numbers.

What is the Headline from the sections – We are Active-Having Fun and enjoying everything Scouting has to offer we are 4th Newbury (St Johns) Scout group.

On top of all this action within the sections behind the scenes the group has an Executive committee that is there to support the leaders in taking some of the admin tasks that running a group like this has away from the leaders so they can concentrate of the delivery of scouting to young people. Officially the Scout associations says "The Group Executive exists to support the Group Scout Leader in meeting the responsibilities of their appointment" Personally that to me is a little to general and perhaps does not value the work they do high enough. As they are fundamental to the running of the group and ensuring the leaders are able to concentrate on activities for the young people rather than paperwork and fund raising. They also offer a great balance to us leaders who sometimes get a little carried away with what we see as fantastic ideas but perhaps needs a little more thinking through.

Members of the Committee are also the Charity Trustees of the Scout Group.

Those of you who look at numbers etc will have heard from our treasurer that the group has a solid foundation financially and with the late arrival of a gift aid payment or generous donation from the government we appear to be quite well off. Indeed to a degree we are, however that money will not stretch far when equipment needs replacing etc and of course a large amount of the funds held actually relate to deposits and donations already rec'd for the Scouts summer trip to Jersey this year so in that sense has already been spent. We currently continue to be able to offer a scouting at the lowest subscription rate in the area which is down to our great financial management of course and also fact that unlike other groups we do not have to fully fund a meeting hall. Alongside that all the time the Church are late billing us, our rent is pretty cheap!! Providing the quality scouting we do of course becomes increasingly challenging in the economic times we all find ourselves in and we hope that you will all support any future fund raising activities the group puts together. I can assure you every penny we get goes into providing the exciting scouting the young people get.

You have already heard from Stuart our Chair and Sue our treasurer and there are also a number of other parents and indeed non group parents who site working behind the scenes to make sure the group runs smoothly and is able to financially support its self. We will shortly be electing our Executive to take forward again for the next 12 months. So many thanks to those who have supported the leaders this year and I look forward to working with the next committee to continue and build on the solid foundations this group has.

With regard to the Executive we have already had the nominations in for the next year and will shortly be asking you vote in the team however please do not sit there thinking that is it for 12 months they have all the people they need. Far from it as I'm sure Stuart will tell you as we go through the voting process. At

any time you are welcome to offer help and support be it on fund raising activities or individual section events don't be shy we rarely turn down a volunteer no matter how small an offer you might think it is!! We are always happy to add Co-opted members to the team as and when appropriate.

Finally 3 more bits of thanks – 1) To the Husbands, wives and partners of the leaders and committee members of the group for your support of respective "others" giving up time and often joining them on events 2) to the parents and families of our young people who allow us leaders to take them through the journey that is scouting and hopefully teach them something about life and themselves, and then finally 3) The most important people in all of this, the young people themselves, after all without them we would not be scouting and I for one would not be having the fun I am.

