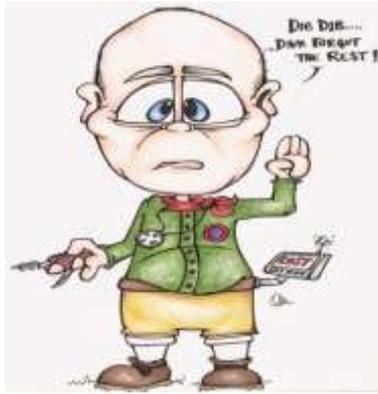


**Group Scout Leader
4th Newbury (St Johns) Scout Group**



AGM 2014

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

To those who do not already know and maybe our newer parents or 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 on the back seat and telling people how it should be done, while blaming everyone else if it doesn't work.

I am responsible for the group as a whole and everyone in it. Hopefully making sure that all the members young and slightly older are enjoying scouting and getting the most out of it while operating within the rules of scouting in a safe environment.

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.

As the longer term parents and members of the group know we try to vary the format of the Group AGM so that it does not just become another boring meeting, we have in recent years been around the camp fire – on Group Camp and now our ever Group Quiz. These AGM / Reviews do end up just being one list after another of great events & activities, especially around this Scout group and sometimes I know it feels like you have heard it all before.

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 and of course earning a few badges to keep along the way.

Of course none of the great things you have heard about them doing in their respective sections 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 group. You have had reports from Kate, Gerard and Bruce to 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. This year again we have expanded our leader team with Jayne joining us in the Cub Pack and Grady one of our Ex scouts starting his leadership trail as a young leader with our Beavers. It's also good to know that a number of our Ex scouts are now spreading the 4th Newbury gospel working as young leaders at 1st Newbury, 2nd Newbury and Greenham scout groups. Thanks also must go to a number of the parents who turn out to help on various events throughout the year.

Saying that we have a strong stable team does not mean we are not open to new faces to bring even more ideas and flexibility in the program we can offer. You could be next! Just put your hand up or come and have a chat with one of the current team.

It's perhaps worth mentioning that leaders do not just arrive "readymade" like a microwave meal. Although some do come through scouting and the Young Leader Scheme, others arrive full of the most important ingredient to us— **enthusiasm**. They then commit to undertake a very good flexible training program. It is designed around your own available time in order to ensure they are able to deliver the type of scouting we all like to see plus of course they are supported by our own experienced leader team. You are not volunteering to commit to every Monday or every activity we can offer flexitime to suit the time you can offer us. The Rate of pay is commensurate with the enjoyment the young people get – you are paid in smiles, thanks and knowledge that you have put something into the community (sadly no cash).

So while you mull that over and decide which section you would like to come and help with I would like to say a huge thank you to all our leader team for the time they put in and the enjoyment our young people get from it.

I am now moving into my 3rd year as GSL here with 4th and I have to say how please I am with the way the group is gelling together and the developing work of our Group Executive who have organised this evening's event.

You will be aware that as a group we last year we re-opened our waiting list which had closed some time ago and at present we are just about managing to offer spaces to all those on it. There are of course times when we cannot offer a space due to numbers and then names are passed onto to other groups in the area to try and ensure every young person gets a chance to enjoy scouting.

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. At 4th we prefer to offer a quality over quantity approach rather than dilute our programme just to squeeze a few more in and collect their subs

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. 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 - Adventurous - Having Fun and enjoying everything Scouting has to offer we are 4th Newbury (St Johns) Scout Group. As a certain advert goes _____ don't do scouting but if they did they would do it the 4th way.

On top of all this action within the sections behind the scenes the group has an Executive committee which I mentioned earlier for organising tonight. This group is there to support the leaders in taking some of the admin tasks or running a group like this. So the leaders can concentrate on 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 too 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 financial numbers etc will have heard from our treasurer that the group has a solid foundation financially. With the current benefit of gift aid payments or otherwise known as a 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 future activities like the Scouts summer trip to Chamboree this year so in that sense that money has been ring fenced. Also since the financial year end we have had to pay out over £5,000 for capitation fees for insurance/ membership and indeed the up-coming scout camp. In general the group is actually spending around £1,000 a year more than it brings in so we are using up those reserves.

We have now for 12 years held subscriptions at the same level and continued to be able to offer fantastic 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 and the rent compared to a commercial venue has been cheap. Providing the quality scouting we do of course becomes increasingly challenging in the economic times we all find ourselves in.

We hope that you will all support any future fund raising activities the Executive puts together as you all did donating prizes for the stall at the church Christmas fete and attending this evening.

However we have tried to polish the crystal ball and look to the future with the rising costs of activities, rent (doubled over last 2 years), insurances (up £6.00 per head this year alone) and we feel that there is a need building to review our subscription level now rather than wait until we are forced into a large increase to cover costs. Therefore it is the intention to raise the annual subscription fee from next September (2014) to £72.00 per year or 3 Term payments of £24.00.

If anyone has concerns over affordability regarding this increase please do contact either our Group chairman Stuart or myself in complete confidence we do try to ensure no young person misses out on any scouting because of financial restrictions.

I can assure you every penny we get goes into providing the exciting scouting the young people get nobody working in the group takes and payment for their time in fact most leaders do not even claim expenses they are often entitled to. We intend to make sure we maximise the amount of funds being channelled into activities and continue to keep our admin costs as low as possible.

Please also continue to help us by collecting the annual Sainburys active kids vouchers when they come out and most important if you are a Amazon Shopper please go in via the like on our group web site this then gives us a small donation against what you spend at no extra cost to yourself.

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 are 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 helped us run so successfully. I know most of the executive have offered their services again for another year which is fantastic news but if there is anybody out there who thinks they can bring a valuable skill or just some time to help please do not be shy, stop looking at the floor and volunteer.

We are very lucky at this group unlike some others that the AGM is not a meeting where we need to brow beat people into joining or lock the doors and not let them until they sign up, in fact far from it we like the AGM to be a celebration of the scouting year and a bit of fun.

Finally 3 more bits of thanks –

1) To the Partners, Husbands, Wives (particularly mine – who not only puts up with it all but actually comes along on Summer camp to help with the food and QM duties) 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 all 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.



Like the owl we are ready to take off for another year of Great Scouting

WWW.4thNewburyscouts.org.uk