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1st Henllys GSL's Report AGM 10th May 2017

This is my second GSL report for the Group so I hope it's an improvement on last year. Group numbers have fallen this year to 45 at the January census but have risen to 57 since. I believe that the loss of the Henllys Herald has reduced publicity for the Group so I hope you will all tell your friends about us. We do not currently have any waiting lists but will not be able to take more Beavers until some move up to Cubs. We still have a good balance of female/male members and the group welcomes membership from minority and disadvantaged groups.

This year I would like to welcome Mark and Bill as new leaders to our Cub and Scout sections respectively. It is particularly good to see Bill returning as an ex Henllys Scout and we wish him and Mark long Scouting careers. We still however have some problems with leader numbers some of our leaders have health problems and our thoughts and prayers are with Lesley and Andrew for a speedy recovery. We also have some leaders who are unable to attend every week due to work or family commitments and four of the existing leaders have District and Area roles so we really could do with some additional help. If anyone would like to help in any section please come and see me later or pick up one of our volunteer leaflets. We may also need to ask for parental support for some activities to ensure that we can run these safely and your help and support with this is much appreciated.

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank our Young Leaders. These are 14-18 year old young people who help with our Beaver and Cub sections. 3 of them are ex Henllys Scouts and one has family connections. Holly, Maddie, Chloe and Dyfan thanks for your help and commitment to the Group.

If anyone would like to help with administration or management of the group we can also offer these opportunities. As a group we have some vacancies on our executive committee and we need assistance with fundraising activities and events so if you have some time or expertise to offer please speak to me later. In particular we have a new website but we need someone to upload and manage the content to keep it up to date.

There are currently 51,000 young people across the UK on Scouting waiting lists. Whether you want to help directly or behind the scenes all roles are needed.

Many of the children have done extremely well gaining Chief Scout awards as well as activity and challenge badges in their respective sections. Leaders have also been busy updating their existing training such as renewing first aid training and gaining skills to support children with additional needs. Personally, I have achieved my full Scouting qualification and we have a couple of leaders who are very close. If anyone would like to volunteer the Scout Association offers a full training programme with qualifications that can support career development opportunities.

Last year 1st Henllys was awarded the best Group in the district which is an achievement to be proud of. It was awarded because for our size and membership we were the group with most representation at District activities. Thank you all for achieving this. Despite this across the sections we have still had to cancel some activities because of lack of support. We would appreciate your help with this as often these activities enable our young people to gain new skills and achieve the higher badges and awards in Scouting.

As usual we have been helping out with local events. As ever we were on hand selling burgers and hot dogs at the village fete. We have continued our partnership with the Henllys Local Nature reserve, working with Chris and his team on a number of ventures including path laying, litter picking, ground clearing, tree planting and finding bats. We represented Scouting at the Remembrance Day Parade in Old Cwmbran and at the local service in the village hall where the Vicar explained the significance of jelly babies (ask the Scouts). The cubs have also had a couple of visits to a local home for the elderly and it looks as if both young and old had a good time. Beavers and Cubs took part in the annual Christingle Service at Llanyravon,

As a Group we have camped at St Georges in April (very cold at night), held our end of year BBQ, and walked around Llandegfedd reservoir for our Jamboree on the Trail. It is always fun to bring together the different sections and leaders.

From the picture presentation you will have seen some of the activities the group has been involved in this year. Here are some highlights from the leader reports.

Our Beavers have been politically active this year having practiced voting and visited the Mayor in his parlour. As you may expect they had lots of questions for him! Some of the Beavers have also been shelter building at Blaen Bran including practicing fire safety. Beavers had a 30th Birthday celebration this year with cake and lots of fun activities on a Sunny afternoon in July. In addition our Beaver colonies have been to Pets at Home, Energie trampolining and Go Vertical. We have also celebrated St Davids' Day, Mothering Sunday, Easter and Christmas. All involved a lot of noise, fun and mess as expected with Beavers.

The Cubs took part in the annual cooking competition and whilst they may not have won the judge said ours was the best minestrone soup she had tasted so well done cubs. The Cubs have also been involved in various activities including shooting and construction with marshmallows – more noise, fun and mess. The Cubs camped at Silvercross campsite in Swansea with an assault course- noise, fun and mud! The cubs have also been shooting and visited Go Vertical and Pets at Home.

The Scouts have also been very busy with competitions. Thom Williams came a very respectable second in his age group and three older Scouts, Matthew, Oliver and Julie-Ann were selected to represent Torfaen at the regional shooting finals again. In addition, the Scouts came second in the area cooking competition despite a nearly disastrous fire. I am very proud of how calmly they dealt with the situation and they were commended highly for this. The Scouts also entered 2 teams in the annual Gwent Trek even and both completed the course.

Scout camp last year was a little different and involved canoeing down the River Wye and camping at Botany Bay. Still noisy, fun and often muddy at Botany Bay. The Scouts have also been working on a variety of badges and towards their Chief Scouts Gold Award. Notable for me was the combined photography and fundraising where the Scouts chose

photographs for their calendar which was sold for fundraising – thanks to all who supported this. My concern is where in Henllys does the White Lion live!

It has been a quiet year for our Quartermaster as we have only bought gazebos and a water carrying device. Going forward however we are looking to invest in a new Marquee to replace the one that has been in service since 1994. More details on that next year.

For more details on any of the above please see the section reports that will be posted on the 1st Henllys web site – technology permitting.

As ever we have to thank the executive committee who have kept the Group running behind the scenes. All your efforts have been appreciated! I would personally like to thank Fiona, Nicola and Danielle for all their hard work this year. Sadly Danielle is unable to continue in her role as Secretary so hopefully one of you will feel able to help.

I would like to thank all the parents, grandparents and guardians who have supported the group throughout the year. I hope you will continue to support the Group and help it continue to be one of the best Groups in the District.

As ever I must give the biggest thanks to the leaders who make the Group what it is. Without these people giving up all their spare time your children would not be able to enjoy the activities they do. Most of our leaders have very busy working lives so it is all the more impressive the amount of time they freely give to the Group and your children. Words cannot express my thanks strongly enough.

Wilma Thomas

GSL

10th May 2017