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1st Henllys GSL's Report AGM 22nd May 2019

This is my fourth GSL report for the Group so I'm aiming to make this the best so far. Group numbers have increased by 24% and currently there are 68 young people, 3 Young Leaders, 1 DofE volunteer and 12 leaders. During the year we have increased by 13 young people and our cub group is now running a waiting list. With Sonic's return from his sabbatical we have 4 leaders in scouts although one has work commitments stopping him attending full time. We have lost an experienced leader from cubs and Steve has to work away on occasions, but recently gained a new assistant leader so welcome Sian and a big thank you to Alison for her contribution to cubs. Mark also completed his training during this year so well done to him. Our Tuesday Beaver colony is running with 2 regular leaders and one with work commitments. On Wednesday we are running with myself and Wendy who does 3 hours on a Wednesday. We have also gained TicTac as a leader having achieved the age of 18 – he had no chance of escaping but we will lose him to University in September. Each of our sections is running with very little slack so we may have to introduce parent rotas, especially when we are out and about. If anyone is interested in helping out with a section please come and talk to me. We can offer roles to suit your availability and I can promise that there's nothing better than the smiles on our young people's faces.

I believe that the loss of the regular Henllys Herald has reduced publicity for the Group so I hope you will all continue to tell your friends about us. We currently have a waiting list for cubs but are managing to accommodate Beavers and Scouts so far. We still have a good balance of female/male members and the group welcomes membership from minority and disadvantaged groups.

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. And are all ex Henllys Scouts. Jules, Maddie, Toby and Nye 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. Our Chair has resigned due to work, and our Secretary has other commitments preventing her continuing so if anyone can give some time all help will be gratefully received. I would like to thank Fiona and Sarah for their help and support to the group, and me personally. Help can be regular or ad hoc just speak to me and we will meet your commitments. We also need assistance with fundraising activities and events so if you have some time or expertise to offer please speak to me later. In particular, the Group has a website but we need someone to upload and manage the content to keep it up to date. We also continuing to develop Online Scout Manager for communication and you will receive emails from there in future. We intend to allow access to parents to update their child's details and contact information so please watch out for this.

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.

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 and Blaen Bran community woodland, working with them on several ventures including 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. A big thank you to one of our Beaver parents who is a serving soldier. Ronnie came and marched with us again bringing a real idea of service to our country, and helping the Beavers to march!. Beavers and Cubs took part in the annual Christingle Service at Llanyravon,

As a Group we joined the Area Portcullis camp earlier this month. The weather was very kind but extremely cold and it was an excellent camp with lots of activities and we had 37 of our children present.

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 active this year and have been on a sleepover, out camping, hiking pond dipping, hunting Easter eggs, balsam bashing, ringos at Pontypool, and shelter building. They have been to the pantomime, had a visit from santa at the District movie night, visited the fire station and the library as well as Fairhill Church. The Beavers have also undertaken lots of badge

work and are developing lots of basic Scouting skills such as navigation, knots and exploring and both sections have completed their disability awareness badges this year. Everything involved a lot of noise, fun and mess as expected with Beavers.

The cubs held their District camp in September, and enjoyed a snowball fight, Nerf Wars, and singing around the campfire. They have been to the local nature reserve and helped choose where to site the fire pit. They have also made journey sticks and Chris has treated them to pizza. Cubs took part in the annual cooking competition, have been to Cwmbran town centre to take photos for their photography badge and have visited the 3 store to talk about internet safety. They have also visited the animals at Pets at Home. Another fun activity was the NERF wars themed Christmas party which was great fun. The cubs have been shooting and played golf. Finally the cubs have been working on basic scouting values and setting their code of conduct to promote positive behaviour.

The Scouts have also been very busy this year offering 12 nights of camping via the group and another 12 from Dragon camps. The main camp was at Paccar, just outside London where they enjoyed lots of activities including a lightning show around the campfire. They have also camped at Gwent Trek, Botany Bay at Christmas and Portcullis. Scouts have been sailing at Llanegfedd, and climbing. The Scouts have been working on their skills, knots, meteorology, navigation, compass skills, pioneering and environmental issues.

This year has been busy for our Quartermaster as we have replaced the group Marquee - the old one had been in service since 1994. This significant investment of £1945 will hopefully last for the next 24 years! There have also been several small investments and updates to our gas piping. Repairs are a regular feature and there is normally at least 1 tent in my kitchen! If anyone would like to help with equipment please shout as Jeremy now has a leader role with Scouts,

Behaviour in most of the sections can be challenging and we appreciate your support in promoting positive behaviour at all ages and discouraging your children from hitting and climbing on each other which can make it difficult to offer the planned programme and be offputting to the quieter children.

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 Sarah for all their hard work this year.

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 us and help the group continue to be one of the best in the District. I hope that you all feel part of this group and we really need some of you to step up and help us. We have leaders with several roles in Scouting and vacancies on our Exec committee which is our support mechanism. We have no support for fundraising which means that we have to cover all costs from subs which could make Scouting too expensive for some. For example I have worked on Scouting every day for over a month at the same time as commuting and working full time and at times it is too much. We are not asking for that level of commitment from anyone else. Even being on the Exec involves some initial training and 3 meetings a year with possibly some letters or phone calls in between. If you can only help at events or for a few hours occasionally we can find something for you. Please talk to me and see how you can help to make this the best environment for your child

As ever I must give the biggest thanks to the leaders who make the Group what it is. Without these people giving up their spare time and annual leave your children would not be able to enjoy the activities they do. Most of our leaders also 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

22nd May 2019