

Bedfordshire County Scouts

Development newsletter 1

November 2009

Introduction

This is what I hope will be the first of a series of publications to let everybody know what is happening in the area of development around the County. Development covers a multitude of things and hopefully there will be something in here that will interest you.

Local Development Officer

Jo Cockcroft has had some fantastic successes this year in helping to recruit adults to become involved in running sections. Some of the work she did with leaders from Shefford has helped them to open a second Cub Pack and hopefully early in the new year they will be opening a second Beaver Colony. Jo is going on maternity leave in November, returning in early January. If you want to use some of Jo's time to help you find adults to help at your Group or Unit, please contact me.

Development day

The three Luton Districts had a successful development day. This was open to all Group Scout Leaders, Group Chairmen and members of the District team. There were several presentations which covered fund raising, the County vision, the role of Executive committees, adult recruitment and development planning. One of the outcomes of the day was that Liz Burnham (District Commissioner – Lea Valley) and her GSLs have spent an evening working on development plans for each of the Groups and these will then feed into a District development plan.

County Team

For the first time in many years, we now have an Assistant County Commissioner for each of the four "youth" sections. The final piece of the jigsaw was the appointment of Ken Brooker to the role of ACC for Scouts. We have also been fortunate to have appointed Roger Cladd to the role of ACC Development. Roger will be working with Districts and Groups to work up development plans. Jo Winslade has also joined the team as ACC Development. Jo's role will include giving active support to mainly the Beaver and Cub sections.

Supporting Districts, Sections, Groups, Leaders

I have drawn up a programme for members of the County team for how we can support Districts, Groups, sections and leaders in 2010. This includes items such as Anne Cladd (ACC Beavers) attending at least one District Beaver leaders' meeting in every District. John Duley as County Commissioner has not escaped from the programme. He is due to attend at least one meeting of GSLs/District Team meetings and also one District Executive meeting in every District. A copy of the programme is on the web site.

Support for you

One of the key items for me for 2010 is that we as members of the County Team need to be at events and talk to leaders and young people. From talking to leaders we become more aware of local issues. If we find these are being repeated across the County then we will endeavour to provide some support. Therefore, if lots of Cub leaders are saying they find difficulty with the Global Challenge then we will look to see what we can do to help, not just those leaders who have mentioned it, but all the leaders. If you want a member of the team to attend an event, please ask.

Programmes on Line

One of the tools available to every adult in the movement is “Programmes on line”. This can be found on www.scouts.org. If you are not registered, please let me know and I can let you have the link for how you can access the system. With programmes on line you can get several ideas if you enter one word, e.g. “compass”.

Information on scouts.org

Everybody who is an adult member of the Association is recorded on scouts.org. The records show, amongst other things, your contact details, appointment, training etc. If there are items that need amending you can do some of them yourself, e.g. contact details. If your appointment is shown as a Beaver Leader but you are now with the Explorer section you will need to contact either your Appointments Secretary, Group Scout Leader or District Commissioner and they will advise you how the details can be amended. In most cases it will be by the submission of an Adult Application form.

Census figures

I'm sure you know this already, but just in case you don't, the County Census figures showed an increase of over 6%. They are the best figures we have achieved since 2001. Of the nine Districts, eight of them showed an increase in numbers, with the other one showing the same overall total as last year. Our figures were higher than the national and regional percentage increase so you can see that John Duley was pretty pleased with the numbers. It is a testament to the dedication of the section leaders that the figures have increased. I am certain the reason why young people are joining and we are retaining them is down to the quality programmes section leaders are running.

Parents/Carers jobs and hobbies

Do you know what the jobs and hobbies of the parents/carers of the young people in your Group are? When a young person joins we ask for lots of details but we often miss out getting information about the parents/carers. It may be that one of them is involved with motor mechanics – could they run an evening or two? Someone might be a vet; could they run an evening on animal carer/friend? Someone might have an interest in reptiles; could they bring some down and let the young people learn about them? Is there someone who is involved in music and they could run some evenings which could lead to some young people getting the musicians badge? You never know, they may enjoy coming down to run a few evenings they may want to help some more. Parents/carers are a great source of help, but we often don't “tap into it”.

Good Service Awards

Have you got your wood badge for your current role? Every year, people are recommended for “Good Service” awards from the Scout Association. These range from Chief Scout Award for Good Service to Silver Acorn. However, these recommendations often cannot be processed as the nominee has not completed their wood badge for the role they currently hold. If you got your wood badge as a Cub leader and are now a Scout leader and do not hold a wood badge for that role or are not working towards it, please contact your Local Training Manager and I’m sure they will arrange for you to draw up a personal learning plan for your current role.

Development Plans

Has your Group got a development plan? If not would you like some help in drawing one up? This could range from setting a target of getting some Chief Scout awards, encouraging someone to obtain a Nights Way Permit to take Beavers on a sleepover, to understanding about gift aid to ensuring 14 year olds move to Explorers. If you want help, both Roger Cladd and I are available to work with you to design a plan.

Sleepover and Greenfield camping courses

This year, Chris Bent has organised two “sleepover” courses, predominantly aimed at Beaver leaders and also a “green field” course predominantly aimed at leaders who want to take Scouts and Explorers to some very basic facilities. These courses have been booked up within days of being announced. We will be running both of these next year. These were organised as leaders had asked for them. In 2010 we will be running a pioneering and camping event for adults and also a “skills” day for Cub leaders. If there is anything you would like to see the County organise to support you, please let me know.

Joining lists

Do you have young people who are aged at least six but cannot join your Group? Do you offer them the opportunity to join the Group who are based three miles down the road? Have you got a number of them who want to join? Have you thought about opening another section? Could it be that some of their parents would want to become leaders? Could a new section meet on a Saturday? Could a new section meet at somewhere different to the Scout HQ? If you want to explore the possibility of setting up another Beaver Colony etc, please let me know and we can go through some of the ways to attract adults to take on leadership roles.

22nd World Scout Jamboree

Later this month the selection event for the Bedfordshire contingent for the 2011 Jamboree will be taking place. There were over 70 applications for the 36 places so it would appear that the message has got through to the majority of eligible Scouts and Explorer Scouts in the County. The contingent will be looking for opportunities to help out and fund raise around the County. If you are looking for some help at an event, please feel free to contact Steve Davies (sw.davies@ntlworld.com) and I’m sure he will do all he can to get some members of the contingent to attend.

Satellite Beaver Colony

One area I am currently involved with is the possibility of a satellite Beaver Colony being set up at a school. The school have the premises, the school has in excess of 12 eligible young people to join the Colony and I am currently involved in discussions with several parents about running the Colony. They are looking to do this on a flexible basis, possibly one week in three, and they are now in the process of trying to get a couple more parents involved. The satellite section is in preference to starting a new group and finding Group Scout Leader and Executive members etc.

Activity courses/permits

We are looking to arrange a number of courses next year which might help people get an Adventurous Activity Permit or become qualified in supervising archery or shooting. If there is a course which you would like to see run, please let me know and we will endeavour to provide the number of courses to meet the demands of the leaders in the County.

Calendars

We are in the process of finalising the County calendar for 2010 and this will be issued to all of the District Commissioners later this month. We then hope to get Districts calendars from all Districts so we can put together a list of events, etc so we can ensure someone from the County attends District events.

Permits/authorisations

I am in the process of trying to put together a list of everybody in the County who holds a permit or authorisation. The intention is then to publish the list so if a Colony, Pack, Troop or Unit are looking to undertake an activity and they do not have anyone qualified to run the activity then they can ask someone who is.

Southern 50

The Southern 50 is a walking event organised by Greater London North. There are three walks – 50 miles, 50km and 30km. The 30km is purely for Explorer Scouts, whereas the other events are open to members of Network and Adult members. This is being held on 13 February 2010. Chris Foster (Secretary of the Southern 50) attended a meeting in Biggleswade earlier this year to talk to some Explorers and adults about the walks. If you are interested in entering a team in next year's event, please let me know and I will arrange for Chris to come to the County and give a presentation to people about the event.

Support from the County

One of the things I am very keen to address is “what support do Districts, Groups, Sections and leaders want from the County?” The best way I am going to find out is by members of the County Team attending events and talking to leaders or by you telling me. My contact details are at the bottom of the page, so if you want some support, please ask.