



## Group Scout Leader's Annual Report

I'm sitting here on a lovely summer's day writing this report, having just re-read last year's report with a slight chuckle as I reflect on the frankly bizarre years 2020 and 2021 were. 2021 not quite as dramatic as 2020, but not quite 'normal' either. Periods of lockdown followed by complete easing of restrictions in what seems now like almost overnight – although at the time it didn't really feel like that (at least from a Scouting point of view).

In a strange sort of way, 2021 was a very good for 11<sup>th</sup> Folkestone Scouts. I think it demonstrated how generous our volunteers are with their time and resourcefulness, how fantastic and adaptable our young people are, how supportive our members' parents and carers are and gave us a chance to reinvigorate what we do. I know I certainly had long reflections about what I do in Scouting and how I can make small changes for the better for Scouting and for me and my family.

So, enough of the deep soul searching. What have we been up to? Well, what haven't we!! We've seen the full return to face to face Scouting for all sections. They've been out and about with the Cubs heading to clip 'n climb, Explores out hiking the beautiful routes around the District, the Beavers completing many challenges and the Scouts getting stuck in to traditional scouting skills. I'll leave each of the sections to share their full accounts of what they've done in their annual reports.

One of the absolute 2021 highlights for me has been the opening of the 'newest branch of the Scouting family tree' – Squirrel Scouts. A project that has been worked on by national HQ for some time and finally rolled out to every group that wanted to open a Squirrel Drey.

I'm really pleased and proud to say that not only have we opened a Drey, with a full compliment of 18 Squirrels from day 1, but we were the first in Folkestone & Hythe District and in the first batch to open in Kent and the UK.

I want to pass on my special thanks to the team that leapt at the chance to open this sections and to the young people and their parents and carers for creating such a great experience. Again, I'll let Beckie tell you more about Squirrels in her first annual report.

Straying a little out of the 2021 financial year, I'm also extremely pleased that, with the unwavering support of the Group Executive Committee, we've been able to complete many of the long term plans we've had for the centre. Hopefully at our Awards Night this year, we'll be able to formally open the completed decking, making a safe and usable additional 60m<sup>2</sup> of space and finally securing and levelling the 100m<sup>2</sup> outside grass space for our young people to use. The trustees have doggedly gone after grants to support this project and despite the massive and maddening increase in wood prices have still managed to deliver a much-needed resource. We're also really excited to now have the bi-fold doors at the end of the hall, meaning this newly usable space is also extremely accessible, allowing supervision of activities in and out of the hall without having a brick wall stopping the free flow. It also means we quickly cool the hall in the summer simply by creating a cross breeze.

I'm even more excited by the year ahead, with the team planning a great programme for all sections, including a full return the nights away events. To kick it off, we're looking a Group camp for all sections to join in with in May 2023, including a day out for the Squirrels (they're not allowed to camp...yet!) so we can all join in the fun and learn new skills. Find out more on our virtual planner at [11th.org.uk/2023](https://11th.org.uk/2023).

So, all that remains is for me to say my customary, but no less heart felt, thank you to our volunteers. Without them, Scouting simply couldn't happen. Thank you.

Craig - Group Scout Leader