

Introduction

2024 was another very busy and successful year for Batchworth Sea Scouts. Every section has had an exciting and engaging programme for their young people. After a couple of years where our numbers of young people have gone down a little, those numbers increased by 12%, and we are now the largest Scout Group in our District. I would like to thank all those leaders and helpers whose energy and commitment helped us to have such a successful year.

Every section in the group ran camps and nights away events ensuring that every young person had the opportunity to take part in the nights away camping which are a hallmark of Scouting. Our teams of water activity leaders remain strong and have adapted well to some technical changes which required many more formal qualifications and authorisations to run water activities on local waters including Bury Lake. Every Beaver, Cub and Scout has had the opportunity to go kayaking, canoeing, sailing, stand up paddleboarding and much more. Thank you to those leaders who have taken on the extra training and assessment to keep us on the water.

Fundraising

Fundraising has been very important as we start to bring our nearly 60 year old Headquarters building up to date. Our very successful jumble sales in the spring and autumn went from strength to strength. And the Batchworth Arena at the new Batchworth Boat Rally (replacing the Rickmansworth Festival) had loads of fun, music, food and drink. The fundraising results exceeded our expectation and this will be an important part of the Batchworth calendar for years to come. Both the jumble sales and The Batchworth Arena have been successful in getting many new volunteers involved in the Group. Thank you to all of you.

Leadership

We have a strong leadership team and, as we said above, we have increased the numbers of leaders with Authorisations to run adventurous activities. In particular we have focused on ensuring that we have leaders able to run water activities locally in the face of tighter controls on who can lead activities on local waters.

Despite the increase in the numbers of young people in our sections, our waiting lists are still substantial. We would love to increase the size of our section leadership teams so that we could take in more young people from our waiting lists. The bigger the teams become, the more flexible we can be over volunteering whilst ensuring we can continue to deliver a high-quality programme for our young people.

Change

The Scout Association has made changes in recent years to ensure that its constituent charities (like Batchworth) can continue to operate successfully, legally, and safely. The first of these was a change from an Executive Committee with a wide range of responsibilities, to a Trustee Board with a focus on charity governance. This has now been successfully embedded in the way we work.

The second is a much more flexible approach to volunteering and training of its adult volunteers. Rather than signing up for a fixed role, new volunteers are encouraged to join a team of volunteers and find tasks and responsibilities which match their available time, skills and interests. Training beyond the basic will be because volunteers want the knowledge and skills rather than having it thrust on them.

We have opportunities in most sections and we would really welcome anyone who would like to join one of our teams. No experience is needed and there's loads of fun to be had! And by increasing the numbers of adults in our teams we will be able to remove the constraints on recruitment and let more young people share in the fun. Please consider what you are able to offer this fantastic organisation which runs entirely on volunteer effort.

Finally, the first group in our District has successfully opened a Squirrels Drey to provide Scouting for 4 and 5 year olds. We have been asked to consider whether we could open such a provision. If you have younger children or would be interested in working with this age group, do let us know and we can explore what would be involved!

Thank you to everyone who gives up their time for the young people in Batchworth Sea Scouts.

Michael Read & Ben Taunt
Group Lead Volunteers