

Dear Explorers, Scouts, Cubs, Beavers, Squirrels,
Dear parents and carers,

Summer is approaching fast and it's time for another update from the 8th West Wickham Scout Group. I hope you find these newsletters helpful and informative.

Some of you will have been at the Parade Service and Summer Fair at our HQ this past weekend where some of our Cubs worked on their "Earth Tribe" and "Community Impact" badges by reading out some information to the congregation. We had a great turnout – the church elders were very impressed – and we had fun at the fair. Especially throwing wet sponges at a leader (Akela and I were the designated targets) proved to be a hit; a fair number of children came back for more...

Here are a few impressions from the day:



I would also like you all to welcome a few new volunteers who have started to help us deliver a fabulous programme to your children. **Katherine Ball** has started with the Squirrel Team, and **Andrew Philpotts** and **Tom Weedon** have jointly agreed to become our Quarter Masters. Thank you so much for joining the team – it does mean the world to us as the 8th would not exist if you (and all our volunteers) weren't doing what you are doing.

Speaking about QMs: we have just received delivery of the second container to store all our equipment in – it is quite a neat little compound just behind the former “crew hut” at Frylands as you can see from the images below. Thanks to **Olly Campbell, Julie Cook, Jo Loft, Alison Newall, Di Phillips, Andy Preston, Niels Rump, Claire Weedon, Helen Wise** as well as **Barry Goswell** from Frylands for the help on the day. We still need to move some equipment from the trailer we were loaned by Frylands as temporary storage to the new container – something that we will ask the Scouts and Explorers to help with over the next few meetings.



We hope that these two containers will service us well for years to come. **This, finally, concludes our move away from the Methodist Church in Hawes Lane; hooray!**

We have just had the opportunity to obtain a few children's kayaks. These boats are in addition to the stand-up paddleboards we already own. This will allow us to offer an even wider water sports programme to your children (and, yes, there is room to store the kayaks between our two containers). However, this comes with a caveat: We currently only have three leaders that are trained and permitted to take Squirrels, Beavers, Cubs, Scouts and/or Explorers out on the water – the Scout Association has, quite correctly, a fairly stringent licensing regime for such activities to ensure all children (and leaders) are safe – and we could really use some additional help. **So: if water sport is your thing, please do let one of the leaders know; any necessary training will be provided. And, speaking from personal experience, you will not regret it!**

I also have two dates for your calendar: The first is the weekend of the **1st to 4th May 2026** where the group will celebrate its 80th birthday (we were founded as the 46th Beckenham with the “46” signifying the year it all started for us) with a group camp at Bears Woods. All members of all Sections are invited. I am sure the programme for those three days will be as fabulous as the time we all spent together at last year's group camp.



But before that we will be having our AGM as part of a “picnic in the park” after the summer holidays. All members, their parents, carers and siblings are invited to come, sit, eat, chat and a play a game or two together. A formal invitation will be circulated once we have set a date and a location.

(At the last AGM someone suggested that they might want to help us doing DBS checks but I – foolishly! – did not take you up that offer. If you read this, could you please get in touch... And if you aren't that person but would be able and willing to do this (or anything else), please get in touch as well.)

These two events are of course in addition to all the other meetings and events planned by our five Sections for the next weeks and months.

Having around 120 members – ranging from four years of age to 18 – inevitably carries the risk of conflict. In most cases we can handle such conflicts by talking to the young people in question. But there are rare cases where we have to involve parents and carers. While the Scout Association rules provide some general provisions for such cases, they are a little vague. Thus, our trustees have agreed

some clarifications. This policy document, which can be accessed from our website in the “Members Resources” section, also discusses how to ensure that members regularly missing meetings without a good reason do not deprive young people on our waiting list from enjoying scouting with the 8th. Please let me know if you have any questions or concerns.

Let me, however, end with some congratulations.

Two of our members have recently been awarded the top awards in their sections. Neither of them has been in that section for the full two years, making their achievement of completing all challenges set by the Scout Association and the leaders, as well as being awarded several activity badges, all that more noteworthy.

Congratulations to your Chief Scout Awards; very well deserved!



Anyway, that's it for today. Have a lovely summer!



Niels Rump

Group Lead Volunteer

niels.rump@8thwestwickham.org.uk