

Group Scout Leader Meeting (GSL)
MINUTES OF A MEETING HELD ON 11th November 2020
7.30pm held by Zoom (online) Meeting.

Present: Julie Lovett (District Commissioner)
Eric Atkinson (District Chairman)
Andy Carr (1st Framlingham)
Keith Gleen (1st Martlesham)
Barrie Hayter (5th Woodbridge)
Martin Osbourne (1st Otley)
Peter Runnicles (1st Westerfield)
Carol Mincher (District Secretary)
Gareth Cox (1st Kesgrave)
Adam Thorpe (1st Woodbridge)
Joan Gibbs (Westerfield Cubs)
Richard Chaston
Gary Burden (Deputy District Commissioner)

Welcome and apologies

Apologies: Malcolm Bell (District Scout Network Commissioner), Stuart Bayford (1st Saxmundham) and Clare Catton (1st Deben Valley)

Minutes of the last GSL meeting

The Minutes of the last GSL were not discussed.

Matters Arising. None

Risk Assessments

Gary discussed about risk assessments required in order for the Scouting Organisation to return to face-to-face meetings safely. He stated statistics of how many risk assessments have been approved Nationwide and County wide and stated that most risk assessments required 1/2 - 1 day of collaborative volunteer time for each risk assessment. He reported that as of end of October 2020 in Suffolk, 63% of Scouting Association had not submitted a risk assessment, 3% were in progress and 34% had been submitted and approved. In the Deben District, 9 risk assessments have been approved and 1 awaiting approval. He discussed terminology and explained that every Group's risk assessment must go through the approval system. After the 2nd Lockdown those Groups that have had their risk assessment approved and have started face-to-face meetings, will be re-commencing (not re-starting) and they will not have to get their risk Assessment approved again but may have to review it and re-start their face-to-face meetings. He reported that if the Groups wanted to get back to face-to-face meetings then they need to start doing risk assessment and approval process now. The process is that if you want to recommence then send message to the District Commissioner to say they are recommencing and the date of the first meeting.

Action: For the approvals process, Gary will speak to Julie after the meeting.

Gary reported that he is working with a few Deben Groups and other Groups in the County on their risk assessments in order to get them approved efficiently. He reported that there should be an operating plan with the risk assessment and a discussion with the District Commissioner and the Risk Assessment should refer back to the Operating Plan.

Stuart asked why Groups could not have the same Risk Assessment especially if they are very similar groups such as Otley and Grundesburgh. Gary reported that there could be Best Practices (SOPs) across the District but each Risk Assessment needs to be adapted to each individual Group.

Andy asked why the SOPs were not at National Level rather than District Level. Gary reported that in some way the SOPs are on the National Scouting Website and the Group Risk Assessment could refer to this factsheet in the plan or Risk Assessment.

Gary shared an example of a good Risk assessment and plan which also included pictures from Google Maps. Gary offered to help each group with their risk assessments/plans.

Action: Risk Assessment Workshop to be offered via Zoom for all Groups.

Timescales were discussed as there would probably be only about 7-10 days between Lockdown finishing and Christmas break in order to have face-to-face meetings.

Development activities and needs.

The format for discussion was slightly different to normal and each GSL discussed briefly how their Groups were doing. The following is a summary of the information given:

Adam reported that the Beavers Risk Assessment has been approved. He discussed that the Scout shop have sent official books to the Beaver member's homes so they can work towards their award badges at home. He reported they are working on recruitment for a Cub leader and working with the Scouts leaders on mandatory training. He reported that they were using the Lockdown period for getting ready for a return of face-to-face Scouting meetings in January 2021.

Keith reported that their sections cannot meet currently as they use a School and a Church for meetings and both are not available currently to the Public. They have combined both beaver colonies and doing online meetings. They have been doing some Cubs online meetings but have found the Scouts Groups find it more difficult to meet and there has not been many Scouts online meetings.

Andy reported that they have not re-started meetings nor had zoom meetings. They have had a leaders meeting this week and they will be participating in the Race around the World and re-engage with parents and get enthusiasm from the Leaders to start Face-to-Face meetings next year. He reported that self Isolation has been a

big factor in Leaders not wanting to return to Face-to-Face meetings due to people having jobs.

Martin reported that all 3 sections have had meetings via Zoom. He reported that they have lost about 50% of their members and that a lot of children or parents are not committed to zoom meetings. He reported that the Group is going through the process to re-submit their risk assessment and plan to start face-to-face meetings in January. He reported that the majority of the Group Leaders are key workers which make it difficult for them to commit to the meetings.

Julie reported that the Exec Committee were having weekly zoom meetings to discuss and approve Risk Assessments.

Stuart reported that his Group has restarted, having 3 Scout meetings, 3 Explorers and 2 Cubs meetings. He reported that numbers dropped a little bit. He reported that there is a completely a new group of Beavers as the returning ones have moved up to cubs or out of the area or to a different group. He reported that many of the leaders are Key workers so they could not get together so they didn't do zoom meetings over the Summer. He reported that the Group is going well but it is a struggle to get the Scouting participants to stay Socially Distanced but they do stay away from leaders/adults. He reported that during this 2nd Lockdown, the Group members are participating in a Treasure trail around Grundisburgh.

Richard reported the Scouts seem to have the least enthusiasm but the zoom meetings are going OK. He reported that their risk assessment for going for a walk with the Cubs was not accepted and that the young people are really missing each other.

Peter and Joan reported that the Westerfield Group has started working on their Risk Assessment. They meet in a Village Hall which is limiting people in the room to 14 people. He reported that some leaders don't want close contact with young people indoors due to various reasons and so they will resume initially with outdoor meetings.

Gareth reported that many of Kesgrave Group leaders are key/health workers. He reported that he had 152 responses to emails to parents requesting feedback. 71 reported they would return and 58 reported that they needed to make a judgement nearer the restart time. He reported that the Remembrance Ceremony went very well.

Barrie said that many Scouting members were working on badges and some parents have said that their children will not be coming back.

Chris reported that Swarm Explorers have 1 leader and helpers and they have been running meetings, Finn Valley have 3 leaders and have had their Risk Assessment approved and are meeting. Raelwald have 1 new leader in the pipe Line and have had no meetings but starting to look at their Risk Assessment. He reported that there is a new unit - Saxon with new leaders and their Risk Assessment has been recently approved but have not had a meeting yet.

District Commissioner's Report:

Julie said that she would give a very short report as there were different topics on the agenda tonight which needed to be discussed. Julie reported that having a GSL is very important to a group's success.

2021 Capitation Fees, Finance and Census

Eric reported that he had attended 2 County Finance meetings via online meetings - in April 2020 and 1 a couple of weeks ago. He summarised the content of these meetings. There were questions and discussion about whether County costs could be reduced and about how Covid-19/no face-to-face meetings have affected the membership and finances this year. It was also discussed about how Groups that did not get Government/County Grants and have financial difficulties could be helped and where this help should come from. He reported that there was no discussion about the Census at the County meetings and options for capitation this year had not been presented.

Eric reported that at District level, the Exec Committee have started discussions regarding finances and how the Exec can help the groups but no decisions can be made until it is known County has stated what is happening.

The GSLs discussed about their charges as most have not charged for zoom meetings and all agreed that they need to speak to the parents and explain the consequences if there are low numbers of children returning and no fees coming in. It was stated that Scouting Associations in other countries e.g. Ireland and USA have gone bankrupt. Eric re-iterated the seriousness of the situation as the Scouting Association is selling assets. He also stated that it was very important to keep working together.

Insurance was also discussed and how that could affect the Group's finances.

Any Other Business

Carol had to leave the meeting before Any Other Business started therefore not recorded in these minutes.

Date of Next Meeting: Wednesday 13th January 2021 20:00 Zoom meeting.