

# ***SITTINGBOURNE AND MILTON DISTRICT NEWS***

July 09

Dear All

Well what another exciting and interesting month in Sittingbourne and Milton District. And some fab news:

Firstly we have some go-karts! Yipeeeeeee, and even better someone else has paid for them! We have 5 go-karts in total and the idea is that you will be able to hire these for a small charge for a session. We are currently producing the risk assessment and paperwork for this activity and are in the process of buying some safety kit to go with them. Once this is in place, I hope in the next few weeks, I will be sending out an email to let you all know when we will be having a try out evening for the leaders so that you can then use them with your young people.

I eventually hope to be able to build a track at Bexon lane for these and the small hire charges we are going to be charging will go towards the ongoing maintenance costs and hopefully any remainder will go into a pot for a track sometime in the future. However they run well on grass and we will have some cones so that we can lay out a suitable sized course. A massive thank you goes to Angela Palmer from M and B who suggested we make an application for a grant from the housing association that she sits on as a committee member. And happily they have agreed to pay for the go-karts. This is fab and of course it shows that even in these lean times there is money out there to be had if you know how to go about it.

I have also been given a cheque for £92.50 from 4<sup>th</sup> Milton beavers who did a sponsored hike to raise money for the district coffers. A big thank you to them. I will make sure this money is used to purchase some new games for the beaver age group for the camp site.

Last week of course was the district bike ride, and although I was a little disappointed with the turnout it still turned out to be a good day and some individuals should be singled out for the true Scout spirit they showed. Firstly Ethan Diddams from 5<sup>th</sup> Sittingbourne Beavers did a massive 88 laps, well done Ethan. Then some cubs (and two of them young ones at that, at 8years olds) did the full 25 mile bike ride Jordan Collins, Calum Brown, Harry Myres, James Castle, Thomas Austin, and Jack Pike. All decided that doing laps of the field

was a bit too easy for cubs! They all successfully completed it and dare I even say looked in better condition than some of the adults! It had been suggested to me that 25 miles might be too far, however based on this I think next year I will be extending the route! However don't be put off - the route can actually be made or short or long as you like. I would like us to encourage our youngsters to try their hardest and when they see they can achieve these sorts of challenges you can often see the feeling of achievement they feel on their faces. Next year I will try and make it earlier in the year as I hadn't realized when we put this in the District Diary that it was the County show and the first week of the school holiday

Now what a great event the Beaver fun day and sleep over turned out to be. It was pity I couldn't be there for the whole event, but I had to work on the Saturday and Sunday morning. Hopefully your youngsters went home worn out and happy. A big well done to all those leaders who came and helped and supported Kathryn, Elaine, Dawn, Helen, Lizzie, and Martin who were the key players in getting this event together. I know that our County representatives who came and visited were very pleased with what they saw.

Barry Pike and Mark Catteral also rode over 400 miles on mopeds in the national road rally to help raise money for the district. Having had a go on one of the mopeds I am not sure that can have been much fun. But well done and again this money is very welcome.

Now coming up we have the Nuclear Bunker sleep over and some of us will be going parachuting. I have had requests for another Christmas Disco, and of course a District Carole service. I promise this year we will have a seating plan for the carol service as I never expected as many as we had last year. So don't be put off.

We have a number of Scouts throughout the District who are going to be receiving their Chief Scout Gold award at KIJ well done to:-

Samantha Crook	1 <sup>st</sup> Newington
Alisha Marsh	1 <sup>st</sup> Newington
Beth Wetherall	1 <sup>st</sup> Newington
Laurence Marshall	4 <sup>th</sup> Milton Regis
Daniel Ottaway	5 <sup>th</sup> Sittingbourne
Oliver Sage	5 <sup>th</sup> Sittingbourne
Andrew Hutchinson	9 <sup>th</sup> Sititngbourne
Mark Salter	9 <sup>th</sup> Sititngbourne
Alastair Thomas	9 <sup>th</sup> Sititngbourne

This is excellent and sets them well for moving to explorers.

Now on a more strategic note, Frank Pantoney has kindly offered to hold a strategy day for me, this will probably be just into next year. However clearly one

of the problems facing our district that is reflected in the whole of the UK movement is the lack of adult support and new leaders coming into the movement. This I think should be our focus next year. In addition I have just received a briefing document entitled Shaping the Future together, Agreeing Scouting Vision towards 2018. This is the outcome from a lot of research that has been carried out over the previous year with groups throughout the country. It is an excellent document and identifies all the issues that we have in this district. However it also raises what I am sure will be some difficult questions for some of us and challenges us to think why it is that we can't get leaders into our groups. For example could it be that we are not approaching the age group in a manner that they respond to? Are we too focused on our own group and don't see the bigger Scouting picture, Are we to blame for people not volunteering, i.e. are we approachable or do people and parents see that someone has been in a role for a long time and don't think there is a place for them.? I really do believe there are plenty of people out there who want to help, but we are just not approaching them in the right way. So I would ask whilst you all sitting drinking the "leader juice" around the camp fire this summer and the kids are in bed, ask yourself some challenging questions about why it might be you or the culture of the group that is putting people off volunteering?

Well finally I hope you all have a really enjoyable summer. Like me I know lots of you will be on summer camps or helping with KIJ so there won't be a break from Scouting. I hope it all goes well and hopefully if the parachuting goes well I will be catching up with you all in September.

Best regards

Paul Austin  
District Commissioner  
Sittingbourne and Milton district Scouts.

