

## **36<sup>th</sup> EPPING FOREST SOUTH CUB SCOUT REPORT 2020**

2020 looked like it was going to be another exciting scouting year with many planned activities and events including the district activity day. But, with less than three months gone, it all came to a sudden halt with Covid-19 lockdown and new challenges for leaders how to keep cubs going remotely. The 2019/20 district cub activity competition did actually get completed before lockdown and, having taken part in all the activities, the 36<sup>th</sup> cub pack did finish joint second in a very closely fought competition.

Spring term kicked off as normal, with cubs working towards home safety and pioneer activity badges. Two cubs represented the 36<sup>th</sup> in the district chess tournament in January and both came joint third. A team of eight cubs also represented the 36<sup>th</sup> in the district swimming gala in March from which we had five finalists and achieved one podium result. Two older cubs took part in the district karting challenge and two cubs took part in the district air rifle and archery challenge. We almost completed the term with only two weeks left when everything came to a stop.

With no face-to-face meetings or activities allowed and summer term camps and outdoor activities cancelled, the cub section resorted to badgework at home challenges sent out weekly during the summer term. The main focus was on the outdoor challenge badge with cubs sleeping in tents in their garden or dens indoors. The cubs also enjoyed taking part in the group virtual water fight initiated by the scout section. The cubs worked towards the local knowledge and navigator level one badges as part of the planned cub programme. In addition to this, with no school, cubs were encouraged to complete any badges of their choosing at home resulting in many successful cooks and gardeners. The cubs really took to this and an unprecedented 249 badges were awarded from the mid-March lockdown through to the end of August.

During Autumn term the cubs continued with weekly badgework at home tasks and worked towards international, astronomer and disability awareness badges. In addition to this, with lockdown restrictions easing, three Saturday morning hikes were held in the local forest with limited numbers permitted per session. During the hikes, the cubs completed the local knowledge badge and part of the adventure challenge badge. The term finished with the ever popular winter night hike around the forest course held over two Monday evenings again due to limited numbers permitted per session.

Throughout all the cub activities, in addition to working towards activity badges, the cubs have worked towards their challenge badges. Gaining all the challenge badges, plus six activity badges, leads to a cub being awarded the Chief Scouts Silver Award. This is the highest award a cub can earn and, despite the logistical difficulties this year, ten cubs were presented the Silver award during 2020. In general, with the success of badgework tasks at home, the cubs have not fallen behind with progressing towards the Chief Scout Silver award this year.

The cub pack currently has thirty-one young people in the section with a balanced age range from eight to ten and a half. Despite the difficulties thrown up during this year, attrition within the cub section has been minimal with four cubs leaving the cub pack. Two moved away from the local area, one decided to leave scouting and only one left due to Covid-19 reasons.

The adult leadership team has remained strong throughout the year with cub scout leader Peter Hayward in charge, supported by assistant cub scout leader Philip Moir. Assistant cub scout leader Roy Hardy and section assistant Bart Kolosowski cannot help with Monday meetings but are still ready to help with cub camps. At the start of the year we also welcomed Marie Nyland-Pinto to the section as a section assistant. The adult leaders have been supported by young leaders Ewan Linsdall, Fred Johnson and Tom Allen during the year. Ewan and Tom have now transferred to the scout section and have been replaced by young leaders James Hitching and Victor Hallam.

Despite the difficulties, the cub pack has remained active in some form throughout the year. I would like to say thank you to all the leaders for their support in everything we have achieved this year and particularly to all the parents for their support helping the cubs with badgework and activities at home. Hopefully we can return to normal scouting during 2021.

Pete Hayward (Akela)  
Cub Scout Leader  
36<sup>th</sup> Epping Forest South Sea Scout Group

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