

New Members

We would like to take this opportunity to welcome you and your son/daughter to 1st Gossoms End Scout Troop. We hope that they enjoy their stay with us.

This letter is to let you know what will happen in the first few weeks at Scouts if you are new to Scouting and to advise you of some differences from Cubs.

1. Meetings

Scouts meet on a Thursday evening between 7pm and 9pm.

Please arrive 10 minutes early as meetings start at 7pm

If you are late, please wait by the front door until flagbreak is finished.

We are often outside the hut so please ensure that your child is dressed appropriately for the weather. Some meetings are in Uniform and others in activity dress (casual clothing that is suitable for the activity)

We also meet on occasion away from the hut, at the Phasels Wood Campsite or Northchurch common for example. Again, you will be notified in advance and we say at the end of every meeting what is happening next week. Details of the programme can be found on our website in the calendar

www.1stgossomsendscouts.org.uk

2. The First Six Weeks

During the first five to six weeks your child can attend both Cubs and Scouts in order to get used to the change.

The Scout section is different to Cubs in that the Scouts have to do much more for themselves as we move the programme on and they start to learn new skills. They also have to adapt to both new leaders and an older age range. It is impossible to decide if Scouts is for you by attending one meeting, which is why we say try it for six meetings.

Cubs start linking at Scouts either on the first Thursday of term or the first Thursday after half term once they are at least ten and a half. Due to the large number of Scouts it is not possible for them to start linking any earlier.

Please wear your Cub uniform to the uniformed meetings until you are invested.

3. Investiture

After the first five to six weeks they will be invested into Scouts and they will make the Scout promise. The period may sometimes be shorter or longer depending on our programme as with some evening activities it is not possible to fit in investitures as well.

For this they will need a green Scout shirt, which can be purchased at **The Complete Outdoors** at Bourne End.

A neckerchief and badges are provided. We can provide a woggle for £1 or this can be bought at the above or from most Scout Campsites

The investitures take place at the end of the meeting, usually from 8.45pm and parents are welcome to watch if they wish. Please check with a leader for the timings because if we have a lot to invest we will start earlier.

4. Subscriptions (subs)

Subs are due after investiture for new members that haven't come up from Cubs. If you are coming up from Cubs and have already paid your Cub subscription no further payment is required until next January.

Thereafter subs are collected once a year on the registration evening held in January. The amount is currently set at £115 per year. This money covers: -

- Annual fees to District, County and National bodies for insurance and leader training. This is called a capitation fee, and currently stands at £35.15 per year.
- Money is also required to cover the main bills of the hut such as rates, electricity, water and insurance. There is also an on-going amount of general repair and maintenance. However, for major repairs the group still has to look to fund-raising and donations.
- Badges.
- Neckerchiefs
- Equipment needed for Troop meetings.

[Gift Aid](#) - Please complete the Gift Aid form if you are a UK tax payer

This allows us to get the income tax you paid back on the subs. This gives us approximately £28 extra per person, for just a signature on your part.

5. Other activities

The Scout Leaders generally organise one weekend camp per month (subject to work and other commitments). There is also a weeklong Easter camp and 1 or 2-week Summer camp. We also try to run international camps at a minimum of one every 3 years.

These camps are optional but are very desirable and beneficial enabling the Scouts to put the skills they have learnt during the weekly meetings into practice. There will be an additional charge, the cost dependant on the location and activities. See the **Online booking** in the Scouts section of the website

6. The Programme

Next weeks programme is announced at the end of the previous meeting. We also have it on our website for the members that forget before they get home. Please look at the website before phoning a leader up as it can be difficult to get ready for a meeting if we have 40 phone calls to answer. Reminders are sometimes sent out by email and txt so make sure we have your address/number.

7. Discipline

With large numbers in the Troop discipline is essential. As Leaders we need to be able to trust the Scouts to get on with activities. If we cannot, then it is not possible to run some of the more adventurous activities. Simply, we will not tolerate the following behaviours:

Bullying.

Scouts are intelligent enough to know when their actions make others feel bad. IT MUST NOT HAPPEN.

Talking during the brief periods that we require silence.

We must give the rules out to every game and instructions for every activity, and we must believe that the Scouts have heard them. If they are talking, they are not listening and we will not continue with that game or activity.

Simple disobedience.

Our rules are sensible and justifiable. If asked to do something, they are expected to do it. Leaders will be happy to explain the reasons for rules... but not normally immediately.

8. Absence/Lateness

If your child is unable to attend a Scout meeting for any reason (Illness, School event, or not allowed out as homework hasn't been done) please let a Leader know before the meeting. We spend a lot of time planning the Scout programme and it is not always possible to run the activity we planned if half the troop are missing. The Leaders would appreciate as much notice as possible for events like school concerts or other regular commitments that clash with Scouts.

Scouts who miss three meetings in any month will forfeit their place in the troop unless they have contacted their Patrol Leader or Scout Leader before the event. Obviously we will take exceptional circumstances into account.

If your child decides that they wish to leave the Scout Troop we would really like to know why. It may be that scouts clash with another activity they do or they no longer enjoy Scouting. Whatever the reason we would like to know as it's possible something has upset them that we are unaware of and may be able to do something about.

9. Parades and Other Events

The Group parades formally twice a year. The first, in April, is for the St George's Day Parade (St George is the patron saint of Scouting). The second, in November, is the Remembrance Day Parade. We consider these to be important events and expect all Scouts to attend.

There are other events that take place during the year such as district & county events, camps and competitions. Details of these can be found on the website.

10. Uniform

For regular Troop nights the required uniform is: Scout shirt, Group necker and woggle, Scout or black school trousers and black school shoes. We suggest that the Scouts wear a t-shirt under their uniform shirt, so that they can take the shirt off if we are running around. No football shirts please.

Please ensure that your child's name is clearly marked on shirts and neckers.

For details of where badges go on the uniform are on the website.

Please label all of your child's clothing. Every year we end up with lots of un-named items which no ones claims!

11. Criteria for choosing a PL or APL

Please note that PL's and APL's are not chosen by age or the time they have been in the Scout troop, the criteria we use is;

Their attendance over the last year - it is important for them to be present the majority of the time

The amount of experience they have and their ability to teach others.

Have they gained additional experience by coming on the camps we run, sailing days and other District and County events or do they just attend on Thursday's

It is quite common for younger children who have come on more camps and have a higher attendance to be a PL or APL when there are older Scouts in their patrols with less experience.

PL's & APL will be on trial for their first term to see how they get on and will either then be made up to full status or if we think they are struggling and not doing very well someone else may get a trial. It is important that we have the best possible person doing the job of PL & APL, especially now our troop numbers have recently doubled.

12. Mobile Phones

Scouts may bring their mobile phones to Scout meetings but should turn them off or put them on silent as they can be a distraction while we are running activities. Scouts who play with their phones during meetings should expect them to be confiscated.

We allow Patrol Leaders & Assistant Patrol Leaders to bring their phones on some of our camps but not all so please check the kit list first. They should only be used as designated times once all the jobs have been done.

13. Online booking (camps & sailing)

Why Book Online?

It's quicker & easier to make a booking online and if events are over subscribed we can easily see the order people booked.

Can I just tell you that I want to come on a Scout event?

If you make a verbal booking please follow this up with an online booking or an email to confirm and I will then send you the relevant permission forms. A lot of people talk to me before and after Scout meetings and unless I am able to write it down I am not always able to remember who asked to book on a certain event.

How Do I Pay?

We do not plan on taking payment online via our website. Please continue to hand payment (Cash or Cheque) to a Scout Leader along with the completed permission form

If you do Online banking tick the box and we will send you our bank account details so you can transfer the money to our account.

If you would like pay in instalments for the more expensive camps please mention this when booking as it is usually possible to do this and spread the cost over a number of months.

Are Permission to Camp Forms still issued?

Permission forms will be emailed to you shortly after you have booked online
You can also receive a Scout kit list if you request one.

How do I find out about future Camps & Events now?

We announce camps and sailing events at the end of our weekly meetings. Further information can be obtained on the website from the Calendar and the Scout Online Camp Bookings page

What about Parents and Scouts who do not have Internet access at home?

Parents may have access at work.

Most Scouts have access to the Internet from a PC at school.

Internet Access is available at the Library.

However, Leaders will provide printed permission forms on request.

Why is the number of places available on camps limited?

Some activities require a high level of Leader supervision and camps are limited based on the number of Leaders who are available for the event.

Shouldn't all of the Leaders be at every camp?

It would be nice if we could

The Leaders are unpaid volunteers who enjoy teaching Scouting skills but they also have other commitments such as family and work.

How is it decided who gets to go if the camp is over subscribed?

We decide based on the following

The first Scouts to return their forms & deposit/payment.

Then we look at the Scouts attendance records and behaviour.

Some camps are by invitation only and the criteria for these is having enough experience, high attendance and good behaviour.

Camp I book after the deadline?

For local camps at Phasels this may be possible but for longer trips further away and competitions bookings must be made before the deadline.

The booking deadlines are published on the permission forms and in the online booking.

Reminders are also put in the website calendar below the Thursday program.

The dates are also on display on the notice boards at the hut

If you miss the deadline you can ask to be put on a waiting list in case a place becomes available.

Why aren't the permission forms available to download off the website?

The permission forms often contain details of the location of the camp and we think it unwise to publish this on the internet.

We do have blank permission forms that can be downloaded in the forms section.

Basic Skills Camp

All Scouts should go on a basic skills camp as their first camp. We teach the basics of tent pitching, fire lighting, cooking, the correct use of our lanterns and petrol cookers, axe and saw knots and first aid. We aim to run two of these camps each year with one in March and the other in October.

Can I book on other camps if I have not done a Basic Skills camp?

You can book Easter and Summer camps as long as you do a Basic Skills camp first. If you are already booked on a Basic Skills camp that is before the Easter or Summer camp that you want to go on you can book it straight away.

International Camps

To be eligible you **MUST** have done at least one Easter or Summer camp in the UK with us.