

18/08/2020

Dear Parent / Carer,

Thank you for your support

We hope that you are keeping well and managing to enjoy the summer during these challenging times. We would like to thank every one of you that has continued to support Cookridge Village Scout Group, all your contributions are helping to keep our hut maintained whilst we have been unable to meet face to face in Scouting. We have taken advantage of the closure to:

- Safely replace some of the ceilings that contain low grade asbestos so that we can upgrade the broken fluorescent lighting.
- Begin the installation of a disabled toilet and a shower to improve the facilities for camping on site.
- Improve the electrics in the kitchen so that we can now use two ovens at the same time when our young members are cooking.

We will also invest in all the required hand sanitising equipment and signage needed. We may need to buy some pop-up gazebos for outdoor Scouting. Your subscriptions are important to us, maintaining a hut is costly and they are helping us return to Scouting as soon as possible.

It has been great to see Scouts UK responding in positive ways with national activities for us all to get involved in like #TheGreatIndoors however we know that you would all prefer to be Scouting at a local level. Within our Group, we have been trying our best to work out how to keep connected with everyone, find a way to maintain a sense of community during this time. Beavers have been putting on Zoom calls every two to three weeks, Cubs and Scouts have been emailing out activities for our young members to get involved in that we hope you have appreciated.

Share your fun

We really would love for you to share with us any Scouting activities that you have been able to take part in on our 'Members of CVSG' Facebook page as we haven't heard from many of you recently. Our leaders are missing you all and want to know you are okay. We have sent some challenges out this week and will be sending out some more challenges on Facebook or email for you to share with your children during the last few weeks of the holidays as we gear up to returning to Scouting. Do share your efforts with the group on Facebook.

70th Birthday Badges and Hike to The Moon

You will find enclosed two badges for your camp blankets from our 70th birthday Competition. They were designed by two of our young members, Oliver Smith (Camp Site) & Matthew Smith (Necker). It was our intention to give them out at the end of year chip walk to mark the end of our 70th Year so we will just have to put a get together on hold for when we can next meet again as a Group. We hope you like them! If you took part in #hiketothemoon then you have a badge enclosed for this too.

Our plans for getting back together at Scouts safely

Some of you have started to ask what will be happening in September. I hope you will be reassured to hear that Scouts UK has issued plenty of guidelines for us to follow now that some of the government restrictions around the COVID-19 pandemic are being relaxed.

We are taking our restarting plans seriously and both leaders and the Exec Committee have held meetings to get ourselves up to date with the requirements to make ourselves COVID safe. We will follow all government rules and guidance from Scouts' UKHQ. Our priority is to keep young people and adults safe.

Here is an outline of how we will operate, following the Scouts' 'COVID Code':

- New control measures will be in place for all activities
- Additional hygiene measures will be put in place
- Social distancing will be observed
- Group sizes will be limited
- Adjustments will be made for young people who are vulnerable or affected by COVID-19

Once our risk assessments are complete and approved, we will share them with you. Returning to Scouts will happen in phases, the first of which will let us resume outdoor activities in small groups. Returning to face-to-face Scouts will be voluntary for all young people, parents / carers, and volunteers.

Where we are as a Group now

We were both nervous and excited to learn that face-to-face scouting is now allowed to restart. As much as we would love to meet up from September 2020, whether we will be able to however, will depend on you, and if you are willing to help the group, as we now have a ridiculously small team of leaders and helpers whose resources are limited.

There will be restrictions on what we do and how we do it, whilst we are still in a pandemic. To deliver a safe programme we need more leaders and helpers, simple as that. So, we are starting by asking for one parent / carer per child to remain on site (as has been requested by the sports activities that have begun over the summer). From this pool of adults, we would like for some of you to volunteer to help deliver the session. If we do not get enough volunteers, we will rota you in occasionally to help.

Scouts UK are extremely strict about their ratios and even though we will have some volunteers this way, ultimately, we need enough adults to commit to becoming a leader/assistant leader in order to meet insurance and safety guidelines. It is hoped that many parents will come forward in this 'new normal' to ensure no one leader has too much on their plate.

If we have inspired you to join the few of us trying to deliver Scouting in Cookridge, then please do not hesitate to get in touch info@cvsq.co.uk and we will provide some more information on the simple training requirements.

So, until we hear from some of you to help deliver face to face Scouting, we have made the decision that we can provide the following from September 2020:

Beavers – A mixture of live online and face-to-face scouting

Cubs – Non-live online scouting

Scouts – Non-live online scouting

Cubs & Scouts – Occasional face-to-face scouting if we can pool leader resource to put on a meeting.

This is because:

Beavers

In Beavers, we now only have one active leader, Neil Holloway. He has only just started and needs some more help. On Zoom he is supported by two young leaders, Matthew Smith and Matthew Saville (aged 15 & 17 respectively). Steven Sheppard, our Group Scout Leader joins the call so that we meet our safety guidelines. Our other young leader, Leah Watkins (aged 18) has been unable to join in for technical reasons. Current guidelines indicate that to run a face-to-face outdoor session we will need three leaders to run a section night. Neil wants to run face-to-face Scouting so needs one or two more adults to join him as leaders so that he can run a section night. Steven and other leaders from other sections are willing to help when they can to enable face-to-face scouting. Please get in touch if you are interested in getting more involved.

Cubs

In Cubs, we also only have one leader, Ruth Sen. Ruth has held the role for many years but needs someone to handover to. Ruth has hearing difficulties and underlying health conditions. She gave us notice two years ago (!) that she needs to take a step back to being an assistant because of these conditions. As a result, she can't run live Zoom sessions so she will try to pre-record a message when she can for the children and email weekly tasks. She doesn't currently feel able to provide face-to-face scouting outside for the same health reasons. She would like to return to face-to-face scouting when we are allowed indoors, ideally as a mentor / key support to someone who wants to become the new Akela. She is supported by two assistant cub leaders, Tim Rollett and Laura Watkins. They have both been active assistant cub leaders for several years and want to continue as assistants. So, if anyone you know, or you would like to get involved in Cubs please get in touch. Does anyone want to help deliver a live Zoom sessions or face-to-face scouting if we can get enough leaders to support? We really need someone to become our next Akela, you will have three very experienced leaders to support you.

Scouts

In Scouts, again we only have one leader, Jonathan Watkins. Johnny enjoys live Scouting but is not set up to run live Zoom sessions so from September he will pre-record a message when he can for the children and email weekly tasks. Currently, for health reasons, he doesn't feel able to provide face-to-face scouting until he is comfortable that the risk levels are lower and has more help. Mike Edwards is our assistant scout leader and kit master. He also has responsibilities in the wider Scouting community which means he has enough on his plate and wants to stay as an assistant leader. Lee Bradford will join the group in September as another assistant leader having helped at Cubs for the past couple of years. This is fabulous but at this level, we really need three leaders so that the children can take part in more adventurous activities, off site, in the longer term. We really need two adults to step in and train to become leaders. And if you're not camera shy and would like to run a Zoom session please do step forward. You will be supported by three others experienced in Scouting.

A big ask?

These sound like big asks, and they are. For the past few years, we have been asking for parent helpers and we do have a few (thank you to those of you reading who are regular helpers) but to ensure the future of our group we need leaders. The more we have, the more we can share the workload (many hands make light work, right?). And we know you are a fan of scouting because you have enrolled your child in it and have seen how they come home buzzing every week. In this 'new normal', please give some of your time for your child and help make scouting even more brilliant.

Start as a regular parent helper, we will support you with the training and all work together as a team. With more willing helpers to deliver scouting we can make CVSG the strong group it deserves to be. There are many leaders worldwide who started with a dip of the toe into scouting and discovered what fun it is, how great it feels to make a difference and have made some great friends too. What are you waiting for?! Come join us.

Okay, now I've done the hard sell, what will happen when we meet?

Safely resuming face-to-face Scouts outdoors

Firstly, anyone with COVID-19 symptoms, or who has been in contact with anyone who has COVID-19 symptoms (within the last two weeks), should not come to any face-to-face activities, and should follow government guidelines on self-isolation and testing.

Secondly, young people who are in a vulnerable group might not be able to return to face-to-face activities at this stage, but we will do everything we can to enable them to do so. If your child is in a vulnerable group, please contact Steven directly so we can chat through some options.

We're also aware some young people, including young people with additional needs, might need new or different reasonable adjustments putting in place to support a return to face-to-face Scouts – again, we're happy to discuss this with you.

We'd also like to let you know some of the updates to our arrangements for making sure our indoor activities will be COVID-19 safe.

Once we have completed our 'COVID-safe' risk assessments we will communicate our control measures in greater detail to all volunteers, young people and parents/carers, and all are encouraged to raise concerns if you have any.

At this stage, at a high level we can say that:

Arrival and departure arrangements

- Group size will be limited to 15. This may require a rota to be in place as we currently do not have enough leaders to have more than one group a week per section.
- Arrival and departure times are tbc and may vary depending on session complexity and number of people on site.
- Whilst scouting is limited to outdoors, pick up and drop off will be outside the hut at a designated space tbc.
- Should we decide that parents / carers need to stay, they will not be part of the group, unless helping for the night. You will be required to wait away from the group, perhaps in your car or a designated area.

Hand sanitisation, hygiene and personal protective equipment

- We will ask all persons arriving at the hut to wash their hands before arrival and we will need each person to apply hand sanitisation gel upon arrival / during the activities.
- For those with allergies, we would suggest bringing own hand gel / soap and we do have access to a tap at the back of the hut if hand washing is required.

Social distancing

- All persons, including the children, will be expected to apply the current government guidelines, on social distances. At this moment, this would be 1m plus, or ideally 2m always.
- We will not be forming 'bubbles' as young members in each section are from different year groups and schools.

Other measures in place

- Currently we are not allowed to meet indoors, hence we will look at investing in some pop-up gazebos.
- One toilet will be available for use for emergencies. We would ask you to get the children to use your own toilet before arrival to minimise likelihood of need to use the hut toilet. An adult will be expected to disinfect the facilities after use with provided cleaning products.
- Any equipment that we may decide to use will be cleaned first.
- For first aid, we may need parents to stay in order to administer first aid to their child. If our risk assessment allows, we would wear appropriate PPE to provide First Aid.

Permission to attend

- Prior to the start of September term, we will be asking you to confirm that you understand the new measures in place and are happy for your child to resume coming to outdoor meetings.
- You will do this by emailing info@cvsg.co.uk with 'I confirm that I understand the new measures in place and am happy / not happy for my child / children to resume coming to outdoor meetings.'
- Please do let us know what your questions or concerns are at this stage to help us improve our plans, especially if you do not feel you can return at this stage.

Finally, we will be required to keep a register of those attending to help with the track and trace process.

We are all looking forward to getting outdoor activities back up and running again, so that we can gain more skills and have more fun together. Please don't hesitate to get in touch info@cvsg.co.uk if you have any questions or concerns.

Look forward to (hopefully) seeing you soon!

Best wishes,

Sarah Smith
ChairGroup

Steven Sheppard
Scout Leader