

EXPLORER SCOUT UNIT REPORT

Roger Pettett, Centurions ESL



Attendance

Numbers have grown from 24 members in Autumn 2021 to 28 members in Summer 2022 with one new leader (Alfie), one visiting leader (Matt) and four others (myself, Jeremy, Chris and Ian) and occasional visits from our DESC Paul. Friday meetings have a steady attendance figure of 20+ with an anticipated dip of around 20% during exam season.

OSM Section Size Planning predicts attendance of 40 by May 2023 and around 60 by May 2024.

COVID

Meetings proceeded during COVID when permitted, with good, and increasing, attendance but limited activities.

World Scout Jamboree & EsEx23

Ten participants selected across all Essex Expeditions 2023, with an unprecedented five selections for World Scout Jamboree, one additional on the waiting list, two for North America and three for Jersey (one current Explorer and two from Henham & Elsenham). Selection was performed through a series of camps where skills, engagement, teamwork and leadership were assessed, together with a panel interview. Well done to all!

To have so many selected is a fantastic testament to the quality of scouting in the district but also a significant financial burden, with around £30,000 needed across all the expeditions.

World Scout Jamboree Fundraising & Donations

Under normal circumstances, WSJ selection would happen well in advance of the Jamboree itself, meaning attendees have a much longer timeframe in which to raise funds. Unfortunately COVID has compressed this into only 18 months, adding to the financial challenge. We are grateful for any and all assistance which parents, family and friends of Explorers and Hatfield Forest District scouting can provide not only financially but also opportunities for events, corporate sponsorships and the like.

- Soap Box Race £190 from water sales
- Plant & cake sales (Great Garnetts Farmers Market, Dunmow Group AGM and elsewhere)
- Dunmow Fritch (next weekend)
- Dunmow Carnival (September)
- Ongoing exploration of grant availability (Town / District / County Councils, Youth Foundations), Rotary clubs, Round Tables - £500 from Bishops Stortford RT
- Corporate Donations (£250 from Natwest via Arnie)
- Generous group donations from HBO (£500), Great Dunmow (£3,000) and very recently SAS (£150 per EsEx23 member)

No specific update on fundraising for North America and Jersey trips

Camps & Activities

Camps have been in limited supply.

- Essex Scouts Mountain Activity Team (ESMAT) winter weekend Lake District (4x Explorers, 1 leader).
- Individual assessment and training weekends for EsEx23 candidate selections.
- Dunmow Group Jubilee Activity Day
- Essex Explorers' 20th Birthday camp (July) - Thorrington - 18x Explorers, 4x leaders) where the unit won the highly competitive sedan chair race with a combination of sleek design, lightweight eco-friendly materials, strategy and luck.

Upcoming:

- Summer camp (August) - Lochgoilhead - (7x Explorers, 1x Network, 4x leaders) UK location chosen primarily due to ongoing uncertainty around international travel.
- County Marathon (September/October) - Gradbach
- Now considering options for both Winter and next Summer. KISC Centenary looks attractive but expensive. Next summer we will of course have nearly half the unit away with EsEx23 expeditions.

Badgework

A series of First Response evenings run by Dot resulted in twelve level five and two level four first aiders, also forming a requisite part of training for several young leaders in the unit. Night hike planning and execution, with an evening's instruction by Arnie resulted in thirteen navigator level threes. Also awarded over the last twelve months has been a scattering of time on the water, paddle sports and musician staged badges.

Several Friday evenings have been taken up with food-related activities, proving ever-popular with hungry Explorers and Leaders alike. Hits have included pizza from scratch, Korean night with sushi and bulgogi, and even the very well-attended Winter meal at Tanoshii.

Duke of Edinburgh awards are progressing, again, post-COVID, with several awarded to Explorers through their schools and a visit to us from Bill, the County DofE coordinator. Organising nights away has been a problem through COVID meaning many Explorers are struggling to achieve the requisite N/A counts for Chief Scout's Platinum and Diamond badges, and therefore also Explorer Belt and Queen's Scout award.