



## **Welcome to the 1<sup>st</sup> Lower Morden Scout Group**

This leaflet is intended to help your son/daughter get the most out of Scouting and to establish a partnership between our Scout Group and parents.



### **A Little Bit About Us**

As you may have read in the Welcome Letter, our Scout Group, the 1<sup>st</sup> Lower Morden, was formed in 2005 following the merger of 2 local Scout Groups – the 4<sup>th</sup> Morden and the 7<sup>th</sup> Morden. Our Scout District encompasses the London Borough of Merton and is called the Wimbledon and Wandle Scout District. Our District along with Richmond, Kingston, Sutton & Croydon form the Greater London South West (GLSW) Scout County.

All the leaders and helpers in the Group are unpaid volunteers who give up their time to organise and run each Scout section. Each registered volunteer has been vetted by the Scout Association and our Leaders undergo structured training in accordance with Scout Association Policy to enable them to offer safe and challenging programmes for our Beavers, Cubs & Scouts.

### **Safeguarding at 1<sup>st</sup> Lower Morden**

It is the Scout Association policy that all adults undertaking scouting activities with children will have been DBS checked. All leaders and helpers in the 1<sup>st</sup> Lower Morden have been, as have a number of our parents. Parents may be involved in group activities at some point, even just providing transport somewhere or being on a parent's rota to help at evening meetings, therefore if you are willing to help then we may ask you to fill out a DBS form when your child joins and become an 'Occasional Helper'.

Any costs of the process are met by the Government and the Scout Association, and the results of the check are totally confidential, as regulated by the Data Protection Act 1998. If you are worried about undergoing this process, please contact the Group Scout Leader to discuss your

concerns in confidence.

All leaders and members of the executive committee are aware and trained in the current Scout Association Safeguarding method. Additional training in line with KCSIE Guidance (2021) is also offered to our adult members. As per the Scouting Association guidelines and Policy Organisation and Rules (POR - our governing procedural rules), the Designated Safeguarding Lead for 1<sup>st</sup> Lower Morden is the Group Scout Leader Andrew Hayward. He, in turn is supported by the Wimbledon & Wandle District Commissioner and David Collins (Vice Chair and Parent Representative).

### **Our Sections**

Our youngest members are our Beaver Scouts with an age range of 6 to 8 years. The Beaver section meet for an hour on Tuesday evening from 5.45pm. The programme of activities reflects the Beaver motto 'fun and friends' and concentrate on games and crafts.

Our Cubs are between the age of 8 and 10 ½ years old and they also meet on a Tuesday night from 7pm to 8.15pm. The activities within the Cub section are designed to be a little bit more challenging and include a programme of badgework reflecting individual achievement and progress.

Our Scouts are aged between 10 ½ and 14 ½ and they meet on a Thursday evening from 7.30pm to 9pm. The Scout section further develops the skills of our members with increasing emphasis placed on encouraging Scouts to plan and meet each challenge for themselves. The programme of badgework through the section can culminate in achieving coveted Scout awards that are recognised by future prospective employers.

And the challenge doesn't stop there – on leaving our Group many of our Scouts move on to a new challenge within the Scout Association known as Explorers. This is usually through the Sharks Explorer Unit (who also meet at our HQ). Explorers are aged between 14 ½ and 18 and are District run. If a young person wishes to continue their service with the Group but not formally join an Explorer Unit then they are able to join the 'virtual' District Explorer Unit. The District also runs a District Scout Network section for those 18 to 25.

### **Our Aims**

Our aims and objectives are in keeping with those of the Scout Association:

*"...to promote the development of young people in achieving their full physical, intellectual, social and spiritual potentials, as individuals, as responsible citizens and as members of their local, national and international communities."*

We believe that these objectives can best be met with the co-operation of the immediate



community and our member's parents (that's you!). We want your son/daughter to have a long and happy Scouting career and are committed to providing that challenge, adventure and fun that only Scouting offers.

### **Attendance Expectations**

We currently have a waiting list of families wanting to take part in Scouting at 1<sup>st</sup> Lower Morden. Members who do not attend regularly lose out by not having the opportunity to complete their badge work, their attendance patterns have a detrimental effect on the rest of the Section and they can create issues for the leaders in organising activities. They are also depriving another child of a place in the Group.

Any member who misses three consecutive weeks without valid reason (principally illness) will be contacted to discuss if their place in the Group can be given to a family on our waiting list. Further, any member who misses 6 or more weeks in the term, again without a valid reason or prior notification, maybe asked to leave the Group at the end of term.

### **Behaviour Expectations**

We have worked with our young people to develop our Group rules which will help them to have the most fun at whilst scouting with us. These are, that all members of our group should:

- Follow the appropriate section's Scout Law, promise and motto in everything we do.
- Show respect to leaders, other Beavers/Cubs/Scouts, parents, and guests.
- Listen and pay attention at all times, especially when someone else is speaking.
- Respect other group property and other members at all times.
- Wear Beaver/Cub/Scout uniform and scarves at every meeting unless told otherwise.
- Leave mobile phones, game consoles and other similar devices at home.
- Have a zero tolerance to any form of bullying.
- Most importantly: Have fun!

The Group operates a three-strike system:

1. In the first instance of poor behaviour, the member will be asked to stop by one of the leadership team.
2. If the poor behaviour continues, a verbal warning will be given to the member.
3. If the member then carries on with the poor behaviour, they will be removed from the activity.

Members may also be removed from activities for more serious behaviour. This is at the discretion of the leader in charge. Parents will be informed when and why their child has been removed from an activity, and will also be informed of repeated poor behaviour over a series of meetings. We keep a record of Red and Yellow cards issued during our meetings. The support and cooperation of all parents in reinforcing these rules will ensure that our members can enjoy and benefit from all our activities.

## **Home/Scouting Contract**

To help meet our objectives we have drawn up a 'contract' that should assist you and us to "do our best". Our Beavers, Cubs & Scouts are all required to make a promise when they join their section. Our 'Contract' is a promise between our Scout Group and our members and parents.

## **Parents/Scout Group Contract**

### **Our Promise To You..**

#### **Joining The Group And Progression Through The Group**

Due to the success of the 1<sup>st</sup> Lower Morden, nearly all the children in the Group start at Beaver age and come up through the sections remaining with us from the age of 6 all the way to 14 ½. We have a waiting list and if your son/daughter would like to join our Group please contact our Group Scout Leader to put their name on the appropriate section's waiting list – for Beavers this would ideally on their 5<sup>th</sup> birthday. We aim to:

#### **Membership:**

- To offer a place within our Group for new members providing that safe numbers are not exceeded, and the quality of membership is not compromised. This is detailed in POR – our Policy, Organisation & Rules. (Priority will always be given to children moving from section to section within the Group which is why we cannot always guarantee places to others).
- Monitor the size of our Group as this is dependent on the number of leader volunteers we have. If you can help, this enables us to keep our activities going for our young members.
- To assist parents/carers to find a place in other local Scout groups if we cannot take a new member.
- To provide a place in Cub & Scout sections for every child joining our Beaver Section by careful control of numbers and based upon expected movements of members. We have a high degree of confidence that this continuity will be possible.

#### **Programmes:**

- Provide an interesting varied and enjoyable programme of activities for all our members to encourage their development as individuals and their continued involvement in Scouting.
- Never allow a member to be forced to take part in any challenging activity that they do not wish to experience. Such activities will normally be of a physical nature such as climbing, abseiling, canoeing, caving, hiking but could include activities requiring skills in numeracy or literacy.

- Never permit a member to take part in and adventurous activity without the appropriate equipment, training, and supervision. Only persons qualified to relevant required Scouting Association standards or better will be permitted to instruct, lead or supervise such activities.
- Give the opportunity to attend a sleepover / camp / pack holiday at least once every calendar year (please be aware that outside pressures such as work commitments or family commitments may disrupt these opportunities).



### **Shooting & Archery**

- Our members during their Scouting career are given the opportunity to use air rifles, archery equipment and 'laser' weapons. Trained personnel qualified to the exacting standards of the relevant National Supervisory body will supervise such activities.
- The Association will only permit such equipment to be used with the written consent of parents. Our Group will observe Scout Association guidance in this area and will not allow any member to take part in such activity unless the express written permission of a parent is obtained.

### **Safety, wellbeing and behaviour:**

- Follow our behaviour and safeguarding policies to ensure all members of the group have equal and fair access to the range of activities we offer.
- Ensure all leaders and volunteers complete required training in line with the guidance from the Scouting Association.
- Encourage, praise and reward those members of the group demonstrating excellent scouting values.
- We will inform parents of any behaviour considered to be inappropriate.
- We are particularly intolerant of all forms of bullying, and if anyone persists in bullying they will be requested to leave the group.
- We will investigate any instances of bullying in a timely manner and work closely with families to resolve these as soon as we can.

### **Complaints, Concerns and Commendations:**

- We will listen to and act upon any complaints, concerns or commendations received from our member's parents. Please do not hesitate to come forward if you do have any concerns or comments, and don't forget we also like to know when we are getting it right!
- Initially direct any questions or comments to the relevant section leader. If you prefer you can pass your comment on to the Group Scout Leader or David Collins, Vice Chair and Parent Representative who sits on the Group Executive Committee.
- Alternatively, you may wish to talk to someone outside of the Group you could contact the District Commissioner (DC).

### **Your promise to us:**

We pride ourselves in the quality of scouting we offer at the 1<sup>st</sup> Lower Morden. All of our programmes are run by volunteers, and we place the very highest expectations on them. As parents and carers, we therefore ask that you support this by agreeing to and following the points below in order that we can continue to maintain excellence in Scouting for all involved.

- Members must attend in full uniform unless otherwise stated. If scarves or woggles go missing, replacements are available for a small charge. Uniform requirements may be waived for certain activities such as hikes, watersports, visits etc. In such instances we will always advise you in plenty of time. Group t shirts may be worn as an alternative to uniform at the discretion of the section leader.
- Ensure that your child attends with the correct equipment they need to take part in the activities that have been set.
- Make sure your child arrives at the allocated time at the start of each session and is collected at the correct time.
- Encourage your child to always strive to do their best, to take part in activities to the best of their ability and to talk to leaders where they are concerned about any activities they have to take part in

### **Behaviour:**

All our members are expected to behave in a reasonable manner and to follow instructions from our leaders and helpers. We ask parents to support us and to help us limit bad behaviour.

- Encourage my child to have the highest standards of behaviour at all times.
- Support the leadership of the 1<sup>st</sup> Lower Morden in the implementation of the behaviour expectations including follow up where necessary.
- Not use social media to raise concerns about my child or the group.
- Provide and update all contact details including emergency contacts and email address.
- Support Group and Section events and meetings .
- Ensure that payments and subs are paid on time. If there are any issues with the cost of an activity, please contact the GSL directly.

### **Behaviour – Parents, guests & visitors:**

In order to support a peaceful and safe environment the Group cannot tolerate parents, carers and visitors exhibiting the following:

- Disruptive behaviour which interferes or threatens to interfere with the operation of the Group, or any other area of the group's grounds including:
- Using loud/or offensive language, swearing, cursing, using profane language or displaying temper.
- Threatening to do actual bodily harm to a member of the Group, fellow parent/carer regardless of whether or not the behaviour constitutes a criminal offence.
- Damaging or destroying group property.
- Abusive or threatening e-mails or text/voicemail/phone messages or other written communication.
- Defamatory, offensive or derogatory comments regarding the Group or any of the leaders/parents, on Facebook or other social media sites. Any concerns you may have about

the Group must be made through the appropriate channels by speaking to the Section Leader or the Group Scout Leader, so they can be dealt with fairly, appropriately, and effectively for all concerned.

- Should any of the above occur on scout premises or at a scout linked event, the parent/carer will be asked to leave the premises voluntarily. Failing this, the group may feel it is necessary to take action by contacting the appropriate authorities and/or sadly, consider banning the offending adult from entering the scout grounds

### **Parades:**

- Make every effort to attend organised parades. Our group always takes part in the District St George's Day Parade in addition to occasional parades such as Remembrance Sunday and our Christmas Service.



### **Parent Rotas:**

- Make yourself available if required to support with an event to enable us to offer the range of activities to as many children as we do. We guarantee you will enjoy it, and it will give us and you a chance to get to know each other better.

### **Subscriptions:**

- Subscriptions are due 3 times a year at the commencement of each school term. 'Subs' must be paid on 1 January, 1 April & 1 September. Prompt payment of Subs is mandatory. Please note that payments can only be made via electronic bank transfer. You will be sent a reminder shortly before the start of each terms advising you that subs are due. If subs remain unpaid once the term has begun then a reminder will be issued at 2 weeks and then finally at 4 weeks. If subs remain unpaid at the end of the 4<sup>th</sup> week then a Termination Of Membership Letter will be issued and your child's membership cancelled and place offered to the next child on the waiting list.
- Please ask your child's section leader or the GSL for the Group's bank account details. **PLEASE NOTE:** It is our policy to assist with, reduce or waive Subs for anyone who may have genuine difficulty in paying. This is also the case for any camp, activity or trip fees.
- Our intention is that no activity or opportunity should be denied because of insufficient funds. If you are unable to meet any costs, please talk in the strictest confidence with any section leader or the GSL.
- We also routinely ask taxpaying parents to fill in a Gift Aid form as that raises additional revenue for the Group at no cost to our families. Please do not resist doing this for us as failing to do so means loss of potential funds for us.



### **Health and Dietary Needs:**

- Keep leaders informed of any health issues that could affect the safety or comfort of their son/daughter. Share any known allergies or medical needs (such as asthma, anaphylaxis, diabetes etc) with the section leader. Consider your child's current state of health if they are going on a hike, a visit or off to camp.
- Inform us of any special dietary requirements or preferences for your son/daughter as food is sometimes prepared and consumed during section meetings - do not wait until a sleepover, camp or a pack holiday to let us know.

### **And Finally...**

The parent's role in Scouting is extremely important and our Group is privileged having good relationships with our parents and the local community. Without your help and support our Group could not be the success it is.

Thank you!

**Andrew Hayward**  
Group Scout Leader, 1<sup>st</sup> Lower Morden.

