



26<sup>th</sup> Perthshire (Dunning) Scout Group

# Summer 2021 Newsletter

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Registered as a charity in Scotland: SC050026

## Welcome!

Well, we made it to the summer! As with so much else in our daily lives, adapting has very much been the word of the moment in Scouting as we've navigated Covid-era rules, regulations and of course, that other lockdown.

We'd barely touched our Christmas leftovers before the country was placed into a second lockdown. Of course, being more prepared this time around, virtual schooling and work was easier to get to grips with and despite uncertainty on a timeline for things opening up again, we pushed on through the winter.

With our creative hats on, we got stuck into virtual meetings where possible, providing opportunities for our young people to see each other online, enjoy some games and entertainment and have fun. Most notably the Cubs enjoyed an evening with dynamic magician Paul Brown and the Scouts put their culinary skills to the test during a pancake cook-a-long with leaders Dan and Ruby and their brothers Jon and James.

We managed to squeeze in a couple of socially distanced hikes once the weather improved – the Cubs to Dunning Den and the Scouts to practice their navigation skills up Clow Hill – before the long-awaited news that face to face Scouting could resume again in April! Safe to say, that everyone was delighted to be back together in Kincladie Wood again and that the marshmallows had most definitely been missed.

Coming up with great ideas to keep our young people engaged in doing stuff they'll love is never a problem – we're a pretty imaginative bunch. But




as our group continues to grow, in order to keep providing these activities we need more help from other adults – like you.

We hear such positive feedback from parents and carers about the unique experience we offer through Scouting in Dunning, so please, show your appreciation by getting involved. People worry they might not have the time to spare but we're really not asking for much, you can give as much or as little as you are able. It's really important for the future of our group that we get that help so don't wait to be asked! If you can offer your time and skills every once in a while, it would really mean the world to us, and mostly to our young people – and yours! Please email or visit our website for more information on getting involved.

As we closed out for the summer and with Covid restrictions relaxed, we were able to enjoy a Group wide trip to the Scouting facility at Fordell First where Leavers, Cubs and Scouts together enjoyed a jam-packed day of activities from grass sledging to crate climbing. It was great for all our young people to be with one another, having fun on the kind of adventure trip we've all been missing - and we hope as rules continue to relax, that there

will be more of these to come as we take steps back to normality.

May we take this opportunity to offer a heartfelt thanks for all you do to support Dunning 26th. We hope you have a wonderful summer with your families and get to enjoy some exciting adventures together. Of course, despite the overwhelming optimism of the vaccine rollout, there is still so much that is uncertain as we move forward and naturally, still so many questions about how life – and for our purposes, Scouting – will look in a few  months time. As we hope we've proven, where there is a will, there's a way and we will continue to offer Scouting opportunities that fit within any guidelines. All being well, we look forward to seeing you all again for meetings in the autumn.

Happy summer!

Sally Dawson (newsletter editor)  
and the rest of the Scouting team



## The Kincladie Shelter

As you'll no doubt have noticed when you've been picking up and dropping off at Kincladie Wood, the community shelter is almost complete. Thanks to an incredible effort from our team of volunteers and in particular to Rob Carr, Paul Kimber and Nathan Critchlow-Watton, who worked through the winter and spring to clear trees, lay ground-works, lug timber and raise the columns.

Using sustainable and locally grown and milled timber from Dupplin Estate (thanks to Jim Thomson) and from



Kincladie Wood itself, the shelter will help support our Scouting activities and provide us with our very first 'base'.

We're so grateful for the generous donations we've received; gravel from Kevin McKechnie and BEAR Scotland alongside gravel and the loan of machinery from Simon Howie, ironmongery from Craig Chalmers of Ogilvie Construction plus our CIF grant from Perth and Kinross Council which has helped with keeping close to our estimated £8,000 costs for the build on target.

We were keen to safely involve our young people as much as possible in the build and it's been great seeing their enthusiasm and interest grow as the hut has over the past few months. When not involved with hoisting columns, our Beavers, Cubs and Scouts have been kept involved with tree-planting and path repairs.



Once the build is complete, we hope to invite our supporters along to the official shelter opening so watch this space and keep in touch through our Facebook page.

Chair of our Executive Committee Rob Carr said:

*"When we scoped out the project in January 2020 we intended it to be a quick community-driven build... but Covid, bad weather and the seriously soggy ground slowed us down. Luckily we have some really resourceful people within our group who have great skills and - more importantly - the tenacity to keep going, which will hopefully inspire some of our young people. We'll keep working over the summer break so that the shelter will be ready for some exciting meetings and events in the autumn."*



# Trumpet tooting time!

Despite the challenges presented by the pandemic, many of our young people knuckled down with their badge work and earned themselves plenty of new badges to decorate their jumpers and shirts with.

Special mention should be given to those young people who earned their Chief Scout Award badges - the highest a young person can earn as a Cub, Beaver or Scout. The Chief Scout Bronze Award badges were presented to Beavers Benjamin, Isabella and Patrick and to earn these, they completed all Challenge Awards as well as four Activity Badges - including Staged Activity Badges.



The Chief Scout Silver Award badges went to Cubs Abigail, Angus W, Angus N, Archie, Beth, Brodie, Leo and Oli who earned their Chief Scout Silver Award badges – the highest award a Cub can earn. To complete it, Cubs need to put in some extra hard graft, earning six Activity or Staged Activity Badges of their choice alongside all seven of the



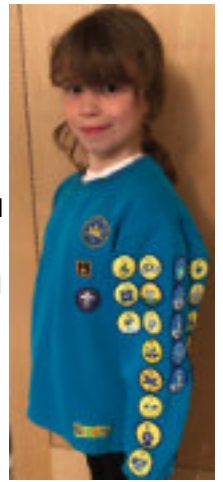
Challenge Awards. It's a really big achievement for our young people and their badges should be worn with pride – it shows they've given new things a go and stuck things out even when the going got tough!



Many congratulations!



We'd also like to toot the trumpet a second time for Isabella who barely has any room left on her Beaver's jumper due to all her badges! She tells us she has a few more to get this summer but once completed, she will have earned all 22 Beaver Activity badges, one Activity Plus badge and 13 out of the 15 Staged Activity badges, plus the six challenge badges and Chief Scout Bronze Award. Phew, I'm exhausted just typing all that!



Her summer plans include gaining her Camp Craft and Navigator Level 1 badge which she hopes to do while visiting Brownsea Island in Poole harbour, England, where the first ever Scouting camp was held! Once she's earned all those badges, she looks forward to starting Cubs and working towards more badges there. Nice work Isabella - and do ask her to show you her badge log book - it's incredible!



Our leaders have been busy earning accolades too. Congratulations to Cub leader Scott Hewitt and Beaver leader Fi Kimber for achieving their Wood Badges which are awarded to all adults in Scouting who complete their training. The wooden beads which can be worn around the neck on a leather string, recognise significant achievement in leadership and direct service to young people.





# News from Our Sections

## Beavers



We're delighted that our Beaver Colony continues to grow, offering our youngest members opportunities for adventure and safe exploration outdoors. We currently have 19 Beavers attending meetings which are led by Beaver Scout Leader Peter Diver and the rest of the team – Fi Kimber, Helen White, Scott Jeffery, William Mullen and Young Leader Duncan Gardner.



Highlights from the term have included learning how to pitch tents, taking aim with archery, practicing emergency aid, building bug houses, cooking pizza pittas, singing songs around the campfire and of course, playing lots of games.



We even welcomed leaders from neighbouring Auchterarder who we were delighted to share our experience with on safely running meetings in the great outdoors.



## Cubs



With 24 Cubs attending, the Pack was initially split into two groups when we returned to face to face meetings again, with each group meeting every two weeks. Once guidance changed, we were all back together – one big, happy family!

Led by Cub Scout Leader Sandy Hunter alongside Scott and Catriona Hewitt, Lianne Miller and Louise Howard, the Cubs are still our largest section and this term we've invested several new recruits from Beavers.



We've made up for the time away from each other with a fun-packed term which has included badge work, welly wanging, haggis hurling, Tomahawk tossing, a focus on Mental Health Awareness week, knot-tying relays, artistic creativity with thank you cards to those who've helped the group over the past year, making informative tick-awareness posters and stacks of brilliant games.







## Scouts

When not trying to master the perfect cup of campfire tea, the Scouts are never happier than with spades, pick axes and saws in their hands – and they've had plenty of time to use them over the past few months.

Now a group of 20 young people with three young leaders - Ruby, Dan and Neve - highlights of the term include creating and then cooking in a dustbin oven, getting greasy for their mechanics badge, building catapults, throwing Tomahawk axes, investing new members and games.



Under Group Scout Leader Nathan Critchlow-Watton alongside Stephen Broad, Susan Whyte, Ewan Cameron, Jim Butcher and Judith Carr and the young leaders, the Scouts have also been instrumental in assisting with the hut build, from willow planting to repairing paths at Kincladie Wood.

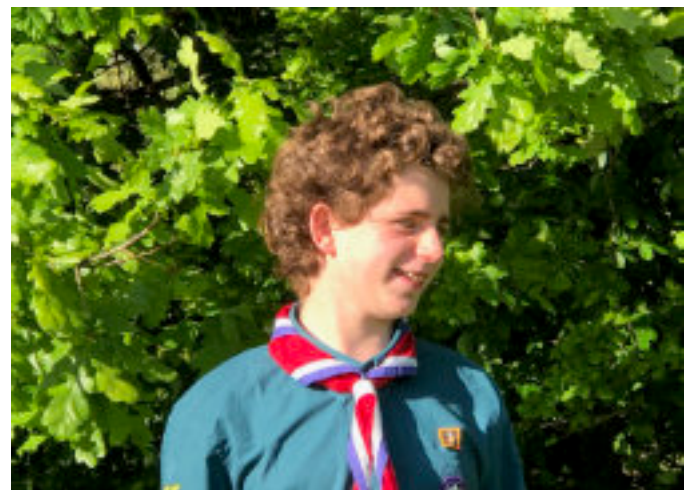


## Our Young People

Think you're too old for Scouting? Think again. Two of our oldest Scouts, George McKechnie and Henry Chalmers, who are moving into S2 at the Community School of Auchterarder after the summer, took some time to share their experiences of Scouting with us.



George, who lives in Dunning with his parents and younger brother and sister, joined the Scouts about two years ago. His other hobbies include playing football in the park and his Playstation.



Henry lives in the countryside outside Auchterarder and enjoys reading, cricket and learning the piano and chanter. He has a younger brother and sister, some sheep, hens, a Highland cow and most recently, nine ducklings.



*What made you want to join the Scouting programme in Dunning and what do you like about it?*

GM: I'd been going to another Scouts group but was getting quite bored of being in a hall every week and not getting to do proper Scout activities. When I heard there was going to be a group in Dunning I wanted to join that instead. I knew that we would be in the woods doing much more interesting things!

I like just about everything we do in Scouts but if I had to choose one favourite thing, it would probably be the Tomahawk throwing!



HC: I joined about two years ago when the Scouts started up in Dunning. It has always been based at Kincladie Wood, with lots of outside activities which I absolutely love. I also like learning new skills and catching up with my friends.

*You're in secondary school now with lots of things to juggle like homework and other after school clubs. What continues to make Scouting important to you and how is it different from other activities you like doing?*

GM: I think Scouts is a thing to look forward to at the end of the week and a good way to get to learn things. I would much rather do Scouts on a Friday night than just go home and watch TV.

HC: I like the fact we are meeting up once a week with great outside tasks and activities and having lots of fun.




*Would you like to continue with Scouting, perhaps becoming a young leader?*

GM: Of course! I would like to become a young leader when I am able to!

HC: Definitely! It is just really fun and positive with great people and it's all outside in the countryside.



*I'm sure you've got a few great stories about your time in Scouts. Tell us about a memorable time?*

GM: A good memory was probably getting to  the flag at the Remembrance Day service.

HC: I remember at Lochgoilhead when we did raft building, all anyone wanted to do was jump in the water. We managed to build two rafts, but we were all soaking and needed to get warmed up afterwards. Great fun!



*What do you think makes a good Scout?*

GM: A good Scout is someone who is respectful to everyone, does the tasks they have been given and always tries their hardest.

HC: Someone who listens to instructions, isn't afraid to get dirty, is good with their hands and helps a lot.



## What one really useful thing have you learnt during your Scouting journey?

GM: How to start a fire and get it going well. It can be very useful when you need it!

HC: Knots are a big help. Working as a team and having a good sense of humour too.

## Finally, it's nearly summer! What are some things you're looking forward to doing over the holidays?

GM: Probably going on holiday somewhere nice, getting out in the sun every day and playing some football.

HC: A Scout camp as adventure trips are just brilliant fun. At home I will be helping with the animals, hopefully finding somewhere quiet outside to read and cycling in the local area.



## And Finally...

This time we're shining the spotlight on our Group Scout Leader Nathan Critchlow-Watton who was instrumental in helping re-establish a Scout-Division in Dunning back in 2017. What started with 11 Beavers has continued to grow and we now have a membership of over 60 young people.

Here Nathan shares some insights into how the past unprecedented year has gone, the challenges Scouting faces, his hopes for the future of Dunning 26th and what he shares in common with Keith Richards...

By way of a background, Nathan has been involved with Scouting since he was a Cub himself back in the Eighties. He believes his time spent as a young person in Scouting taught him how to lead groups and fostered a love of the outdoors and he enjoys watching young people grow in confidence as they learn new skills for life.

Developing resilience, leadership skills and responsibility in young people underpins everything but most importantly, he hopes they have fun while enjoying outdoor adventures.

A manager with SEPA, which works to protect and improve the environment, Nathan's two children also take part in Scouting and his gorgeous spaniel - aptly named Scout - is our unofficial (and very cute!) mascot.



## It's been a tough year and a half running a Scouting programme during a global pandemic. What are some of the positives which have come from it?

It's been a worrying time for everyone, and there's been an additional responsibility for the leaders to make sure the young people came back to enjoy Scouting safely. There have been clear positives though - seeing the whole group come together to support people in the community, and distributing Christmas meals are two highlights. It's been rewarding seeing the sections getting back together, and taking such pleasure in doing scouting activities outdoors together again.

## What are some of the challenges you face as a leader?

We want to continue offering activities and experiences but as our group grows, we always need people to help support our young people. Encouraging other adults to step-up and help is a never-ending



process. The commitment can be as little as two hours a month but without that support, we're limited with what we can offer.

Supporting Scouting as an adult can be really rewarding, and it's a great social activity - I've got to know, and become friends with, a whole range of people I otherwise wouldn't have met.

*Young people have so many after school activities to choose from now. What do you think makes Scouting so appealing?*

Scouting offers a range of exciting experiences and adventurous activities. But most importantly, it's youth-led - the young people help set the programme and are given the space and freedom to work and learn together. I think it's that emphasis on resilience, teamwork and responsibility that makes Scouting unique.

*What are your hopes for the future of Scouting in Dunning – and how do you plan to get there?*

I hope we will continue to help support the community, and give generations of children exciting opportunities to learn new skills, build friendships and become better citizens. To do that, we need adults to support them – with diverse skills, backgrounds and experiences.

*Finally, your best ever memory from your time in Scouting please?*

I still use many of the skills I picked-up in Scouts, and, like Keith Richards, learnt my first lessons in managing people from being a patrol leader!

In terms of specific memories, my first ever Scout camp was in Wales; it rained for ten days solid, and we had a force nine gale. The posted "activity for the day" was normally "try and survive until tomorrow"! Despite that, I still enjoy camping and being outdoors.

