



The Dittons Scout Group

Report to the Annual General Meeting

9th July 2021

The Dittons Scouts, The Shack,
Willowbank, 15 Claygate Lane, Thames Ditton
Charity No. 1038983



Dittons Mission Statement

The Purpose of Scouting at the Dittons

Scouting exists to actively engage and support young people in their personal development, empowering them to make a positive contribution to society. As Scouts we are guided by these values:

Integrity - We act with integrity; we are honest, trustworthy and loyal.

Respect - We have self-respect and respect for others.

Care - We support others and take care of the world in which we live.

Belief - We explore our faiths, beliefs and attitudes.

Co-operation - We make a positive difference; we co-operate with others and make friends.

Group Activity Report | Review of the Dittons in 2020

By Kate Back, Dittons Executive Chair & Suzan Baker, Dittons Group Scout Leader

As we said last year, a wise man once said: if you want something done you ask a busy person. That is STILL totally true of our volunteer team here at the Dittons. We cannot put into words how amazing our team has been during what has been an incredibly difficult time for all of us. Even with this dreadful pandemic, week in and week out, our incredible Leaders and helpers, ALL who are volunteers, have kept the Dittons running ensuring that we kept some form of routine and normality and activities for our Beavers, Cubs, Scouts and Explorers in the face of so many rules and regulations.

Each of our Sections outlines their activities in detail in the following reports. The 2020 annual census show our numbers and how that Dittons continue to flourish. We both want to say a big thank you to all of Leaders who have once again put in a great deal of hard work and freely given up a lot of their time to provide quality Scouting for all your children this past year, and also to all of the members of the Group Executive Committee without whose hard work and support the group really would not be able to run. Their roles are also detailed in this report. So it's a massive thank you to our 2020 activity planners, section greeters, badge capturers, cake makers, nail hammerers, lift givers, question asking and question answering, bonfire building, BBQ burning, picnic making, uniform washing, sideline cheering, email reading, form filling in helpers from every Beaver, Cub, Scout and Explorer at The Dittons – we couldn't do it without you all. As we said - If you are a busy person you can always find time to fit it some Dittons fun!



The Group Executive Committee

By Kate Back, Dittons Executive Chair

The Group Executive Committee plays a vital role in the running of a Scout Group. Executive Committees make decisions and carry out administrative tasks to ensure that the best quality Scouting can be delivered to young people in the Group. Members of the Executive Committee must act collectively as Charity Trustees of the Scout Group. The committee also exists to support the Group Scout Leader in meeting the responsibilities of their appointment.



The Executive Committee members are legally and financially responsible for the running of The Scout Group, maintenance of the Shack, all The Dittons property and equipment along with the raising of funds and the administration of the group's finances. It is a vital role that enables the Leaders to run the activities. Membership is open to all through elections at the AGM or by co-option throughout the year.

All Executive members are trustees of The Dittons:

Trustees 2020		
David Cooper	Philippa Guilford	Charlotte Barker
Suzan Baker	Fiona Ball	Louise O'Gorman
Norman Goldsmith	Julia Hawkins	Melanie Uzunoglu
Stuart Jack	Louise McDonagh	Allen Widdowson
Kate Back	Paul Bartlett	Diana Goodhugh
Jackie Bourne	Tony Butcher	Craig Behrens
Matt Davies	Aileen Widdowson	Pamela Forsyth



Objectives of the Dittons Scout Group

Public Benefit Statement

The purpose of Scouting is to contribute to 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. Scouting uses a method, which is young people in partnership with adults: enjoying what they are doing; learning by doing; participating in varied and progressive activities; making choices for themselves; taking responsibility for their own actions; working in groups; taking increasing responsibility for others; taking part in activities outdoors; sharing in prayer and worship; and making and living out their Scout Promise.

Under the Charities Act 2006 The Scout Association is required to demonstrate that our aims are for the public benefit. Our assessment is that we have met the public benefit criteria under both the advancement of education and the advancement of citizenship or community development headings.



Financial Statement

By Diane Goodhugh

Owing to the Covid pandemic, we were not able to run our annual Fair, a notable event in our community calendar, which has generated significant additional income for our Group over the years. We were eligible for local council grant support to continue to meet our running costs.

We were successful in our application in 2019 for Community Infrastructure Levy funds for a grant to replace our aged Shack roof. This project was started later than originally intended because of Covid. The build timetable was extended and by the end of the year the roof was nearly complete – it is now.

In addition, our volunteers erected two shelters in the grounds, so that our sections could meet outdoors, when permitted, and we purchased additional lighting and equipment to support this change.

The Group's reserves policy is to build reserves to buy the field adjacent to our Shack, if it becomes available for sale, and otherwise hold sufficient resources to continue the charitable activities of the group should income and fundraising activities fall short.

The Group Executive monitors the levels of bank balances and the interest rates received. As interest rates remain at an historic low, we have maintained our current banking/deposit facilities with Lloyds/NSI.

Our Scout Group is a trust established under rules common to all Scout groups. Trustees are appointed in accordance with the Policy, Organisation and Rules of the Scout Association.



Dittons Fair Committee

By Kate Back, Dittons Executive Chair

Our Fair has been running since 1956 and on Giggs Hill Green since 1964. It was a huge blow to us all that due to the pandemic we had to cancel. Not only is the Fair the way we keep our funds topped up, but it is a huge community event bringing together families, local businesses, young and old alike as well as all of the Dittons.

This is our only fundraiser and the only ask we have of all families that join The Dittons. It is this one day, of maximum effort, that ensures the continuation of The Dittons Scout Group. We keep subscriptions to a minimum (less than £1/week) and the Fair is therefore our main source of income to keep our beloved and unique 'Shack' alive and well! None of us know when we will be able to hold a Dittons Fair again. Can I please ask the Fair Committee to stay with us, we can't do anything without you!!!

The wonderful Marianne Pearson stepped forward as Chair of the Fair committee in 2019 but has unfortunately moved from the area so we are looking for a new Chair for the Fair committee. We have all our sponsors and everybody in place as well as an amazing committee so let's hope that the Dittons Fair returns to Giggs Hill Green as soon as possible.

Here's to making our next Dittons Fair, whenever that may be, a roaring success!!!



1932 Committee

By Paul Bartlett, Chair of Committee

The Shack Roof

During 2019 our application for funding from the Elmbridge Borough Council 'Community Infrastructure Levy' (CIL) was successful and we were awarded £45,000 towards the £67,500 cost for replacing The Shack pitched roofs, flat roofs, fascias, barge boards, soffits and guttering. 'Telson Roofwise' started work in August 2020 and, due to challenges presented by the weather, materials constraint and COVID-19, completed work in March 2021. Insulating the flat roofs, led to a corresponding rise in roof height, which meant that the main hall, single pane, Crittall windows had to be replaced with double glazed units, adding more insulation to the hall.



Field Shelters

Matt Davies; his family, with help from Leaders, constructed two field shelters to allow The Dittons to carry on with section meetings outside, in socially distanced bubbles. Suzan Baker found a supplier of picnic benches made from recycled plastic. Great appreciation and thanks to both!



The Kitchen

The Executive Committee and Leaders have had discussions leading to a defined set of requirements for a replacement kitchen. Currently, there are two potential options: develop; refurbish the existing kitchen by knocking through into the office next door and extending the footprint onto the field by 3m; convert the Cub Den room into a kitchen and change the existing kitchen to a store room. Both options are being discussed with building contractors for quotes. The Dittons will need to seek funding to deliver either option, so a variety of avenues will be explored to raise money. If you have experience in raising funds or simply know of organisations that make charitable donations, please contact me.

Whilst it has been a slow and long year, we have continued to make progress and we continue to strive to provide the best facilities for the Group's young people.



Voluntary Hours

Leadership Team Hours for the Dittons

The Charity Commission require us to state what the cost of Leaders and Helpers time would be if charged at a cost of £10 per hour.

For 2020 the Leaders stated their voluntary hours to be in total of 12,030 which if charged would equal a cost of £120,300.

2020	
Beavers	2725
Cubs	2750
Scouts	3500
Explorers	1875
Quatermaster	130
Group Scout Leader	550
Exec	500



Beavers

By David Cooper

The year started so well! We were pleased to welcome Pamela Forsyth back in her role as Assistant Leader for the Toronto Colony in January, after a year's absence to care for a family member. Both Colonies had teams of Section Assistants and Occasional Helpers in place to assist David Cooper to provide fun filled meetings at The Shack. Ollie Bath, Jamie Feaver, Dave Barnes and Adam Barrigan supported the Montreal Colony, whilst Annette Williams, Cathy Oxby and Louise O'Gorman were regular helpers at Toronto Colony meetings.

36 Dittons Beavers attended the **Esher District Beaver Party** at Hinchley Wood Secondary School on Saturday 8th February. The theme of the party was The Wizard of Oz and amongst the activities the Beavers made Tin Man Hats, painted rainbow money boxes and decorated 'Toto' dog shaped biscuits. The party finished with a performance by the Cat's Grin Theatre Company. I thank Martin Cooper for standing in as Master of Ceremonies at the party.



At our meetings in February we organised activities for the Beavers to complete the Experiment and Health & Fitness Activity Badges. Linked to the latter, Craig Oxby organised three training sessions on Saturday afternoons in February, to prepare the Beavers for the **District Cross**

Country Race. This encouraged 34 of our Beavers to enter the race on Oxshott Heath on Sunday 8th March. The Beavers Race was very competitive but with top ten placings for Austin Feltham (2nd), Alex Felton (3rd), Marlin Oxby (5th), Jake Sims (7th) and Cillian Auckland (8th), The Dittons retained the Beaver Team Trophy (for the thirteenth time in fourteen years).

Ten of our Beavers took part in **organised litter picks** around Thames Ditton Village on 18th January, and 15th February to earn the Community Impact Badge (stage 1).

Just as we were preparing for The Dittons Fair the world changed, as a consequence of the Covid-19 pandemic! Our last face to face meetings (prior to lockdown 1) took place on 12th and 13th March. The planned Mother's Day tea parties the following week had to be cancelled, much to the disappointment of Beaver Mums, but at least we were able to

distribute their plants and cards. Unfortunately, our planned sledging and mini ringo activities at Sandown Ski Centre also had to be cancelled.



Over the Easter weekend, Beavers took part in a **Camp at Home** event where they either camped in tents in their gardens or constructed dens indoors to sleep in.



Esher District organised an online party for all Beavers on Saturday 18th April, which many of our Beavers attended. This Zoom meeting was followed by a virtual **St George's Day** service on Sunday 26th April when our Beavers renewed their promises.



In support of the **'Clap for Carers'** initiative, our Beavers stood on their doorsteps each Thursday evening to make as much noise as possible with saucepan lids and wooden spoons!

Our Beavers also took part in the Scout Association's **'Hike to the Moon'** challenge, in support of the BBC's Children in Need Big Night In Appeal in April.

Like many other Scout Leaders across the country, David Cooper had no idea how to organise online meetings for our Beavers. Fortunately, Ben Davies (a Dittons Explorer Scout) had the relevant knowledge and with his considerable support and guidance, we were able to put together an exciting programme for the Summer term.



Our first **Zoom meetings** took place on 22nd and 23rd April and over the following weeks the Beavers enjoyed a range of online games and activities, including bingo, odd socks challenge, Kim's Game, Musical Statues, Thames Ditton local knowledge quiz, Identify the sounds quiz, a Kid's quiz, i-spy, Hangman and 'David says'.

We organised a competition to design a poster to commemorate the **75th anniversary of VE Day** and invited a great grandmother to come online to talk to the Beavers about her memories of VE Day and to judge the amazing posters.



We sought volunteer Beavers to produce **keep fit videos** of different exercises in the style of Joe Wicks. Ben Davies produced the clips into one video which was shown to the Beavers during keep fit meetings. It was great watching the Beavers, their siblings and even a few parents joining in with the exercises online.

As the lockdown continued, we were unable to organise our annual Sleepover at the Shack. We therefore held a virtual **Cowboy and Cowgirl camp** over the weekend of 4th and 5th July. Beavers and their parents erected tents in their gardens and created their own ranches and haciendas. They dressed in appropriate costumes for the opening Zoom meeting and then took part in a number of Cowboy activities including making a wanted poster and sheriff's badge, knot tying, corn hole game, gold digging in their gardens, tin



can shooting and Cowboy Grand National with hobby horses around specially constructed garden courses. After cooking their own Cowboy suppers, the Beavers came online for another Zoom meeting to check on their progress. Each Beaver, with parental help, then took part in Cowboy bath time, where they were videoed being soaked with a bucket of water, before throwing another full bucket of water at an imaginary Beaver sitting next to them. (The clips were subsequently spliced together by Ben Davies to produce an amusing video). We held another late night Zoom meeting where Beavers sat around their own campfires for a few Cowboy songs and entertainment, before setting off to bed in their tents. On Sunday morning the Cowboys prepared their own breakfasts, completed any of the outstanding activities and helped parents take down the tents. During our closing Zoom meeting it was apparent that the Cowboys and Cowgirls (and their parents) had had a great time.



The lockdown restrictions did not lift in time for face to face Colony meetings at the Shack during the Summer term, but we were given permission to hold a series of small ceremonies on the Shack field on 21st July for eight recipients of the **Chief Scout Bronze Award** and twelve Beavers who were **Moving On** to the Cub Packs.

During the Summer break numerous risk assessments were completed and protocols were established to enable face to face meetings to resume on the Shack field in September. Two large shelters were constructed at either end of the field and they were equipped with heavy duty picnic tables and benches.

The Autumn term programme included making **nature collages, tree identification, a scavenger hunt, lighting fires and eating marshmallows**. The Beavers also completed the **Communicator Activity Badge**. On 4th November the Montreal Colony enjoyed sparklers and a small fireworks display. Unfortunately, the introduction of the second lockdown the following day postponed the Toronto Colony fireworks.

The annual **Remembrance Day** service at the Shack, the parade to Giggs Hill Green and service at the War Memorial had to be cancelled, but a small deputation from The Dittons Scout Group spontaneously joined other members of the local community to pay their respects at the War Memorial. The Beavers helped to make crepe paper poppies for The Dittons' cascading garland of poppies that was affixed to the War Memorial and also created their own poppies at home for subsequent display in our online gallery.



With lockdown re-instated, we returned to Zoom meetings for the second half of the Autumn term. The Beavers completed the **Space Activity Badge** over two weeks, including a guest appearance from Troy Wood (a Queen's Scout who designed the badge for Tim Peake's Space Mission). Troy was a very inspirational young man.

Each Colony managed one final face to face meeting in December, where Montreal Colony Beavers toasted marshmallows and Toronto Colony Beavers enjoyed their postponed sparklers and a fireworks display.

During 2020 a total of twelve Beavers were awarded the **Chief Scout's Bronze Award**.

The year proved very challenging for the Beaver leadership team, but all of the team played an active part in planning and putting together exciting activities, both online and at the Shack. I am incredibly grateful for all their help and support. I also pay tribute to Emma Pericas Sims and Sian Headley, my parent representatives for Montreal and Toronto Colonies respectively. The online meetings certainly generated a considerable increase in the number of emails and Whatsapp messages that were circulated each week.



Cubs

By Craig Behrens & Matt Davies

In the winter of 2020 for Cubs had a fairly typical start of the year until the pandemic caught up with us. We had to cease in person meetings in March. Rather quickly, leaders adapted to new technology and moved to online meetings from April to July. When autumn arrived, we were able to return to outdoor in person meetings at the Shack. With the help of the shelters we were able to continue until end of the term except for the mini-lockdown in November when we had to return to Zoom due to Covid restrictions. Nonetheless, we improvised and continued to teach the Cubs new skills.

Mowgli Pack

Over the winter months we celebrated **Chinese New Year and Pancake Day**. A highlight was inviting **Tom's Talking Reptiles** to teach the Cubs a bit about conservation and giving them a hands on experience. The Cubs made origami boxes with chocolates as **Mother's Day gifts**.

For the first half of the Summer term we joined forces with Zulu and held joint online meetings. Mowgli meetings resumed in June. The Cubs filmed themselves in a number of **taskmaster challenges**, played games and continued to learn about scouts. In July, we managed to hold a socially distanced in person moving up ceremony and awarded some Silver awards.



In September, we returned to the Shack for socially distanced meetings. We learned some new ways to play **familiar games, tied knots, painted conkers, and roasted marshmallows**. Most importantly, we **made poppies** to be included in the display on the war memorial. When we returned to online meetings, we learned about US states, did puzzles, escape rooms, and lots of quizzes.

Craig Behrens continued for a third year as Cub Scout Leader and Will Kendrick joined in running and planning pack meetings. Other returning leaders include Carol Hernandez, Linda Huxley, Simon Morris, Lloyd Smith, and Aron Stewart. We appreciate everybody's contribution and thank all of the parents for their support.

Mowgli - 3 Chief Scout Silvers since last AGM

Zulu Pack

Over the summer term we worked towards the **Our World Challenge badge** and **digital safety** along with a number of taskmaster style challenges

The Autumn term arrived and we started we guest speaker Halie from the **forensics experience**, talking about finger prints and we continued with the world challenge badge, our last in person meeting we all made **paper poppies** for the Dittons cascade. Unfortunately due to Covid we had to go back to in Zoom meetings, but we managed to complete the **astronomy badge** by the end of the year

From January this year we continued on zoom, working on our **environmental badge** and continuing with the world challenge badge. We had a joint session with Mowgli cubs where we created plasticine models, we were all impressed with everyone's creations

This term we are working towards our **teamwork challenge badge**, unfortunately there will be no camp this year.

Zulu Cub Scout Leader Matt Davies led Zulu pack for a fourth year supported by Steve Wakefield, Renato Marchio. Thank you to all the parents that have helped as well, it really is greatly appreciated and without your help we wouldn't have been able to run many activities.





Scouts

By Allen Widdowson

The year started as fairly normally during those heady days of face to face meetings in the shack we had a term of varied activities like making **"Breads of the World"**, cooking pancakes, practicing navigation skills. We even managed to squeeze in a **District Day Hike** competition and, with the rest of the Group, managed a clean sweep at the **District Cross Country competition**. But already the signs of what were to come were on us.

Unperturbed, and following the Easter Break, the Scout Troop Zoomed into action to provide a virtual alternative to our Scouting experience. We slipped out of hiking boots and into Kahoots, put aside our pioneering dreams and watched the Scouts develop **Camouflage skills, create Memes & movie scenes** and take on **Extreme Housework challenges**. The dodgeballs were left in Uncle's room and instead we **hiked to the Moon**, and created amazing trick shots. We abandoned our Master Chef tasting forks in favour of an Exquisite Corpse! We even managed to fit a virtual camp in over the summer.

Here are some of the highlights from the year...

District Competitions - The Troop won the Cross Country competition for Scouts with a convincing first and third place. We also squeezed an entry into the Day Hike competition before lock down, entering two competing teams who both did really well.

Capt Tom 100th Birthday Card - We were amazed as we watched the heroism unfold supporting the NHS applause and creating a Captain Tom 100th Birthday Card.



Camp at Home - The highlight for the Scouts and Leaders was the Camp at Home. A packed weekend of a scavenger hunt, cooking meals, camping, knife work, painting with natural beetroot ink and having fun on the weekend of the Summer Solstice. This was very well attended by Scouts and it was wonderful to see siblings and parents in the photographs having just as much fun as the Scouts themselves. It was the epitome of the reasons many of the Scout Leaders joined the Dittons.



Remembrance Day Poppies - We were not able to meet for our normal moving remembrance day parade but the Scouts (and leaders) had a memorable evening teaching Scouting knots online to prepare Parachord poppies to lay on the day.

Online Activities - Our activities continued throughout the year and ranged from making Ravioli, Cooking Pizzas, Learning about recycling, Preparing Shakey Sorbets, an introduction to sign language as well as learning (and inventing) some new online games. Our version of Online Monopoly still needs a





little work but is really showing promise, and who would have thought you could play Virtual Dodgeball. And throughout the year our Scout version of Taskmaster where Scouts rose to the many challenges we presented from the best camouflage and reveal to the best recreation of a movie scene.

It has been an unusual Scouting year made great by the enthusiasm and involvement of our fantastic Scouts and Leaders. They provide suggestions and ideas to keep the leadership team designing newer and better activities to do on our Evenings. Our thanks go to all of them for the untiring support for the Group.



Explorers

By Tom Wilkinson

In the year Jan – Dec 2020 we had 22 Explorers. 5 have moved on at the end of this year and we will be taking on 7 this September. This puts us up to 24 Explorers.



Given this increase in numbers we still need more Leaders to effectively run the unit. We are still looking for new Explorer Leaders and the Unit cannot grow any larger without further adult help.

Typically, the Explorers being teenagers, do not want their parents involved so if there is anyone out there with children in the younger sections who would like to get back into Scouting then then we would be delighted to get you involved.

In 2020 we **won the Esher District Explorer Scope Trophy** for the second year running. This trophy goes to the Unit with the most points from 6 activities with the best 5 counting towards the total score - Cross Country, Raftless Race (cycling, paddling, scavenger hunt and quiz), Indoor Shooting, Backwoods Cooking (cooking on altar fires) and Indoor Games.

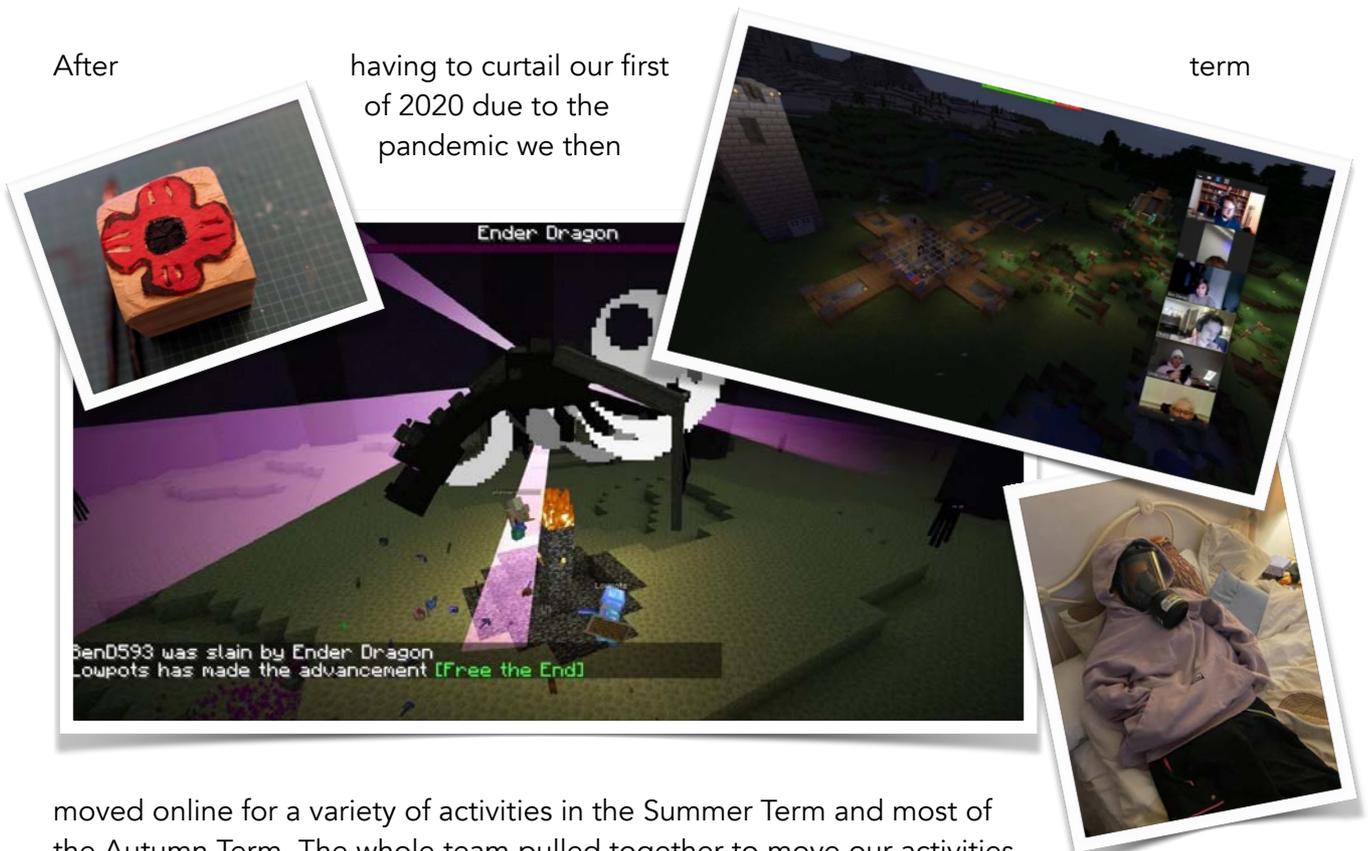
Congratulations to Jonty who yet again came first in the District Cross Country.

We attended the **2020 Esher District Winter Activity Weekend** in January. This was held at Plas Dolygaer in the Brecon Beacons and was once again a massive success amongst the Explorers. It was also a lot of fun, but tiring, for us leaders. Saturday involved hiking in the winter sunshine and Sunday morning featured climbing while Tom did some practice micro-navigation towards his Mountain Leader qualification.

After

having to curtail our first of 2020 due to the pandemic we then

term



moved online for a variety of activities in the Summer Term and most of the Autumn Term. The whole team pulled together to move our activities onto Zoom. Massive thanks to Ben D for helping facilitate all this. Activities run online included: board games, Taskmaster, knots, and the **Minecrafter Badge**. One group created a Discord bot to help calculate carbon footprints earning their **Digital Maker Stage 5 badge**.

We resumed face-to-face meetings for a few weeks in the Autumn term and the ES revived their fire lighting, cooking and map-reading skills.

During the year, we have done a wide variety of activities on Zoom or face-to-face, delivering a varied programme mixing fun activities, building on skills, and working towards higher awards. Our ultimate goal is to have Explorers achieve the Queen's Scout Award as (or just after) leaving the unit at 18.

Again, due to the pandemic, all Duke of Edinburgh awards expeditions were put on hold as staying away overnight was not permitted. As more and more Explorers in the District are signing up for the DofE at all levels, 4 ESUs (The Dittons, 1st Claygate, 1st Oxshott, 1st Weston Green) have set up Dragons DofE for expeditions. We are hoping expeditions will resume in 2021.



The opportunity has been taken to chase up on paperwork for the skills, sport, and service sections so we are in a good position to continue to deliver DofE awards once we return to face-to-face scouting.

In conclusion, it has been a busy year and a challenging one. The Explorer leadership team has adapted to the challenges presented by the ongoing pandemic and continued to deliver a range of activities remotely. The leaders are all looking forward to a return to safe, face-to-face scouting in 2021.

