



County Matters

Issue 60
Summer 2021





Letter from our new County Commissioner Mel Ford

The last time the county commissioner wrote a letter for County Matters, England was just about to head into its second lockdown, schools were closed and, although a handful of units were meeting online, most groups had been away from each other for over six months.

Fast forward a year and, although COVID is still with us, the guiding spirit Amanda mentioned in her letter then is still evident in abundance today, demonstrated by the amazing activities you'll read about in this edition of County Matters! Well over half of the units in Sussex West are back to indoor meetings, many more have been face-to-face outdoors, and several have managed to get away on camps and residential over the holidays.

Guiding prides itself on helping its young members become resilient, resourceful, and independent individuals who can make positive change in their societies. The last 18 months has tested us all in many ways but, given that we've seen so many examples of resilience, patience, and creative problem-solving from our volunteers, I have no doubt that our young members continue to be in very safe and capable hands.

This will be a term of rediscovery for many; a chance to experience the fun, friendship, and connection of guiding once again. Whatever adventures you have this term, please take my thanks and best wishes with you, and remember to share your experiences with us - your stories help raise our profile in the wider community and provide a welcome source of ideas and inspiration to other volunteers!

Mel

1st Yapton Guides & Rangers

‘BOYCOTT YOUR BED’

On a crazy Friday night in July, 19 Guides and Rangers (and a few leaders) abandoned their beds for Action for Children and raised an amazing total of £285.00 to help vulnerable children in the UK. In total the event raised an amazing £152,000 for the charity, as nearly 2000 children and adults across the country boycotted their beds and slept in unusual places.

1st Yapton Guides chose their crazy spots to sleep, including the bath (one even stayed there until 6am despite a dripping tap), a trampoline, the car boot, a tent, out under the stars and in the garden shed!! There was live streamed virtual entertainment - a Horrible Histories Quiz, Strictly Dancing to learn, a host of games to play involving toilet rolls (bowling and building tall towers) and everyone also had a pamper and activity pack to help them get through the night with bath bombs, nail varnish and goodies. There was a badge for everyone to thank them for taking part. Two of the girls were enormously proud to have earned their 10th Night Away with Girlguiding by spending it in their baths!!



To add to the fundraising effort the girls undertook jobs at home - cooking, cleaning and gardening and the Guide who raised the highest amount of donations had made hair scrunchies to sell and baked some amazing cookies, which she sold to her friends at Guides the week before the event.

This was the first time we have taken part in this event, and it was a great night of virtual fun! Maybe we will be back next year to think of some even more unusual places to sleep!

Anna Drynan - 1st Yapton Guide and Ranger Leader

A very proud Mum

As a proud parent in guiding, I have had the pleasure of seeing my three daughters making their Promises as Brownies, Guides and Rainbows...yes one in each section!



We have had zoom meetings and bubbles, but my proudest moment was when I got to accompany my eldest daughter to this year's Youth Awards at Fontwell, where she was one of the few selected to represent all the many girls in the area who had earned their awards through the last year. Although she is now a Guide here she was collecting her Brownie Gold Award achieved during her time at 1st Wick Brownies. She thought that she might not have achieved this because of lockdown, but her leaders went above and beyond to continue with zoom meetings throughout the pandemic, so there was a bit of consistency for our girls.



Also, whilst looking at her Charity Badge for Brownies, my middle daughter found out about a special charity called The Little Princess Hair Trust. All of my daughters who are in 1st Wick Guides, 1st Wick Brownies and 1st Wick Rainbows had their long hair cut off for the Trust. It is a reminder that such a small act of kindness can make a huge difference to another person.

Donna Goncalves - Mum & Leader

Awards

It is with great pride that I wanted to share news of our Unit's first Gold Award. Sophie Ratcliffe has worked so hard to achieve her bronze, silver and gold during the pandemic. She is the epitome of what is a good Rainbow and was always present and participating in our Zoom meetings. She, together with her mum and dad, were always requesting what was next for her to complete each Theme Award. A very well-deserved Gold Award. She has now moved on to Brownies and we wish her every success in her time there.

Shelley Hobart - Leader 1st Billingshurst Rainbows



Julia Wain - Leader with Easebourne Brownies receiving her 20 year Service Award from her Division Commissioner Sue Parry during a Brownie meeting in May.

1st Wick Brownie Camp

This year's summer residential had both the longest and shortest of lead in times!

In November 2019 we asked our Brownies about their thoughts on a summer residential and their response was that they would like to go camping in the woods. We had a discussion and then booked our first ever camp in the tented village at Girlguiding Blackland Farm for July 2020. Well summer 2020 came and went, as covid caused a series of lockdowns and in the autumn, we moved our booking on to July 2021. As time ticked by and the covid pandemic continued to make its presence felt, it was not until just five weeks before the event that the go ahead for residential was given and we set about preparing in five weeks what normally would be spread over five months! With many restrictions still in place we managed most things electronically - forms, payments and a parents/carers meeting on Zoom.

The last week before camp was the hardest, two girls had to delay their arrival by a day and two more were unable to attend camp at all, due to self-isolation, as a result of children in their classes at school testing positive for covid. It was heart-breaking for those girls after such a long wait.

On the Monday before camp, regulations were eased, but the requirement that no more than six people sleep in one tent (or room) stayed, as did the advice to be out of doors as much as possible, so we were so grateful to be going to the tented village. Sunday 25th July the first day of camp finally arrived and threw another challenge at us, rain, torrential rain! However, if I imagined that any of the girls would be put off, I was wrong. They arrived in waterproofs and wellingtons ready for the adventure for which they had waited so long; prepared by a year's worth of outdoor Brownie meetings (when allowed).





Our adventure had many highlights and made many amazing memories, back flips on the bungee trampoline, the mud in the tunnels, reaching the top of the climbing challenge, working as a team to successfully complete the low ropes, paddling together in muddy puddles, making dens in the woods. Many of the pleasures were really simple things that we had all missed in lockdown, singing, the girls playing games spontaneously, cooking and even washing-up. Just being together and not having to keep at a distance all the time, the feeling of freedom and the buzz of sharing the centre with so many other Girlguiding members.

In forty years of running residential this was probably the most stressful to organise (and had one of the longest ever risk assessments) but was without doubt one of the most valued and worthwhile for girls and volunteers alike.

My grateful thanks go to our fabulous Brownie leadership team, to Nicky Angelo for her support as Division Commissioner, to Blackland Farm for their generous support over late cancellations, to Littlehampton Town Council for their £300 grant towards the camp and to all the girls and their families for supporting and making it a great adventure .

Ann Macaulay - Leader 1st Wick (All Saints) Brownies

1st Sullington Brownies

1st Sullington Brownies have been mainly meeting online since May 2020. Our first virtual camp was arranged to coincide with the Petworth Division Camp-Over, the weekend of VE75. Following the success of this camp, the girls begged us to keep Brownies going. With support of parents, we started weekly meetings on Zoom and managed to start completing UMAs and Skills Builders in a different way, whilst also having lots of fun and staying connected whilst the girls were still out of school.



Our second camp took place at the start of the summer holidays last year and was themed around mental wellbeing and resilience. We partnered with 2nd Storrington Guides and did various activities from Feel Good 2 & 3 Skills Builders, shared positive messages and encouraged time out for mindfulness/self-awareness. In those early days of the pandemic, guiding is what kept going when a lot of other things didn't and our parents were so grateful and sent us so many positive messages of thanks.



In October 2020 we organised our third virtual camp, during half term, encompassing the Petworth Division virtual Halloween Hike and held an in-person Halloween-themed craft session as part of that camp (for the limited numbers we were allowed). It was so lovely to see them (meet some of them for the first time) in person. However, despite all the planning and special precautions we took, it was still such hard work on the day not being able to actually get close to the girls, to help them tie a knot in a piece of wool, or tear off a piece of sellotape. We decided then that in person meetings with restrictions (particularly distancing ones) were not for our unit and the girls agreed. We continued our adventures on Zoom.



We decided that our programme for the Spring term 2021 would focus on fun. We had so many fantastic virtual visitors and our fourth camp, which coincided with World Thinking Day, went international as we travelled virtually around the world learning both about cultural customs in other continents and also some guiding traditions. Finally, in July we agreed with the girls that we would start meeting in person, outside, for our last few meetings of term. Determined to keep Brownies fun, we explained to the girls the restrictions we faced and they came up with their suggestions for socially distanced activities and had their own ideas for how to make sure we stayed apart. Leaders were armed with hand sanitiser and a contactless thermometer on arrival and hula hoops were placed for girls to space apart.



Our latest virtual camp-over (well we needed to do another one to earn the County badge!), held in July, was themed around the holiday/summer vibe and again a great success. This time we finished with an Olympic-themed in person closing ceremony, with various sports on offer: archery, badminton, canoeing, equestrian, gymnastics and a sprint finish! The girls had an amazing weekend.

We hope to meet in person in as normal a routine as possible and are planning a real in-person sleepover in November. My heartfelt thanks to all of the unit team for digging deep and pushing through at a time when there have been so many other work and family expectations.

Rachel Swansborough - Leader Sullington Brownies



Disney Camp - 1st Yapton Rangers

1st Yapton Rangers were keen to get back to all the things they enjoyed when they were Guides but also wanted to take the challenge further and combine all their favourite activities into one weekend of fun. They were also working towards their Have Adventures theme awards, so there were lots of outdoor activities to get done, with as many as possible being Disney themed!! There was sign-painting, fire-lighting, water games and a wide game, cooking, making cookie mixes and cake decorating to do, as well as a hike, off on their own in groups passing by the shop for ice cream of course!! Six girls got to hang out for the night in the bunkhouse (the beds were really hard and next time they said they will definitely bring more luxurious mattresses!!) and the other six spent the night outside in tents.



Hollie wrote: 'At the weekend of 10-11th July we had a Disney themed camp at the Scout hut. I really enjoyed making pizzas in a cardboard box, it was definitely something new and tasted amazing! I also really liked going on a photo scavenger hunt as it was something different and it was nice to spend time with our friends exploring the local area. We had to take photos of people and objects, people jumping, people wearing hats, being statues and all sorts. We even had a campfire where we sang some songs (thank goodness some people remembered the words!). It was strange sleeping in a tent again, but it felt like things were getting back to normal! Making breakfast in the morning was really fun, and I enjoyed making it with my friends.'

The Rangers had a fantastic weekend and can't wait for the next time!!

Anna and Hollie - 1st Yapton Rangers

Worthing Cissbury Division Guide and Ranger Cooking Competition

We all arrived at the compound at 6:30pm and with rumbling stomachs it wasn't long before the cooking began. Each group was given a disposable BBQ and had to plan and organise what they were going to cook. Once we had all thoroughly washed our hands, and the extremely flammable anti-bac was taken away, it was time for the cooking to commence. The Guides and Rangers were very resourceful and thought 'outside the box' when it came to the cooking methods they were going to use. Tin foil ovens were definitely a popular choice and allowed for teams to cook meals, such as pizzas, which were very popular.



Everyone was being judged on many different categories, one of which was creativity. None of the groups failed to disappoint us in this category, as everything from tacos to stir fry, kebabs to stuffed peppers, were on the menu. This meant many teams veered away from traditionally barbequed food, which allowed for dietary inclusivity e.g. vegetarians.

Another category that the girls were judged on was their food's presentation. Thanks to many a watchful eye there were no charred veggies in sight and when the meals were presented, along with sides, such as salads, bread and sweet potato fries, it's no surprise that the food seemed to literally disappear. At least we knew that the food had tasted good.



Many teams had plans for desserts too - as if we hadn't already had so much to eat! Many groups had smores as the dessert of choice, but the Ranger groups were particularly creative with dessert stuffed oranges and fruit kebabs served with melted chocolate, which both went down a storm.

As the cookout drew to a close, we licked the remaining marshmallow from our fingers and tallied up the scores. We had three winning groups and each were rewarded with individually wrapped, Covid-safe goodies, as a congratulations on their culinary excellence. Then every anti-bac was returned to its rightful owner and the girls were presented with an 'I've been cooking' badge to thank them all for their hard work. The cookout also contributed towards a level 5 or 6 Skills Builder for 'Have Adventures'.

Megan Tate - 13th Worthing Rangers

Midhurst Guides & Rangers Summer Camp

Saturday

We all arrived at Stedham camp site at 2pm and pitched tents and set up the kitchens. When we were all set up in our patrol tents, we had supper and then played 'flag raid'.

Sunday

In the morning we made draining board gadgets, whilst trying to dodge the rain! And in the afternoon we played Taskmaster. Teams had to make bread beards; run fast whilst drawing a fast thing; make a plate that looked like yummy food and lots more. It was very funny and great fun.



Monday

It was very wet when we woke up, so we had to take shelter in the marquee. This was a craft day and we painted jam jars ready to enjoy mocktails in later in the week. We had great fun with clay, making trinket pots or animals. Some of us made butter in a jam jar. We also made some tie dye plate bags.

Tuesday

The sun came out!! The Tesco van arrived to deliver more food and but it got stuck in the mud coming into the site! It was a good job our leaders are all strong, as they had to push him back out!

We made hike fires and cooked pitta pockets for lunch. Then in the afternoon we made a waterslide down the slope on our campsite and spent the afternoon on the slide, in the paddling pool or playing water games. Everyone got wet including the leaders!

In the evening we had a Hawaiian barbecue, where we all dressed up in costumes and made mocktails as part of our mixology badge. We ended a very busy day with a campfire and s'mores.



Wednesday

Another sunny day. We went for a hike to Stedham mill and when we returned, we painted mugs to take home so we could remember our summer camp.

Another campfire tonight and more s'mores.



Thursday

Quite a party day today, one 18th Birthday and it was GCSE results day! We took our tents down today as soon as they were dry, as tonight we were sleeping under the stars. The Rangers were sleeping in a bivouac that they had built in the woods.

We ended the day with a banquet, followed by prize giving and then entertainment from the Guides and Rangers.





Friday

Everyone woke up early as we had slept under the stars (some of us were lucky enough to see shooting stars!) A very busy morning striking camp, with everything being carried across the field, as the ground was still too soft for vehicles and we didn't want anyone else to get stuck! Our parents arrived to pick us up at 12 o'clock.

It was so good to be able to camp again after missing last year. We are all now looking forward to WSIJ 2022.

1st Midhurst Guides and Rother Valley Rangers

‘Bognor in Bloom’

For many years now, Girlguiding in Bognor Regis has had a strong relationship with the local council. Every year, a Bognor in Bloom Girlguiding competition is run, where all of the local units give their girls the opportunity to design a flowerbed - with the winners having their designs planted and displayed within the town.

This year the theme was the 100th anniversary of The Royal British Legion and ‘Poppy Day’. There were many entries and the judging panel, which included the Town Mayor, chose two winners.



Lily Dunham from 1st Bognor Regis Guides and Charlotte Sturgess from 1st Bognor Regis Brownies were invited to help plant out their designs and were presented with their certificates. The flowerbeds were planted along Bognor Regis seafront and looked beautiful.

Jo Evans - Leader 1st Bognor Regis Guides

1st Wick Guides

We have enjoyed being back face-to-face meetings during the summer term. We have also welcomed three new Guides who have transferred from Brownies. We were very proud to be able to present two of our Guides with their Bronze awards.



This term we have focused on just being us; we had visits to our local parks and had an ice cream party followed by a campfire and s'mores.

We are ended our term with our long awaited camp, when we joined up with another unit; more information to follow on the next page.

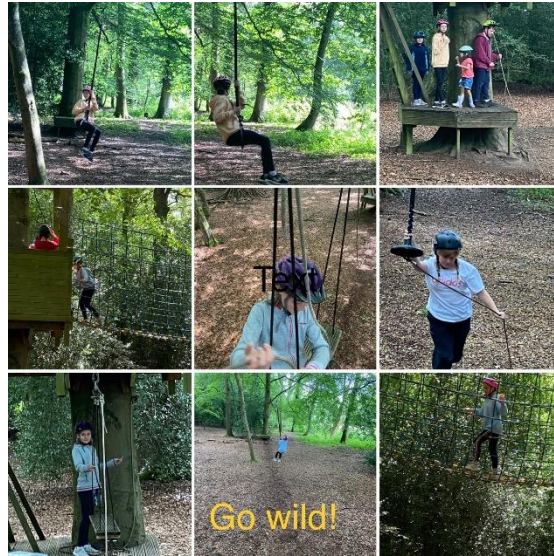
Donna Goncalves - Leader 1st Wick Guides

1st Wick & 2nd Littlehampton Guides Camp

On Sunday 25th July the leadership team from 1st Wick and 2nd Littlehampton Guides set off to Herons Wey camp site in Surrey, to set up camp in readiness for the girls to start their adventures. Despite the rain we successfully set up and spent our first night under canvas for a very long time! Then to get up very early the next morning to travel back to meet our happy campers and their coach, in Littlehampton for 9am. First hiccup no coach! The coach company were running late. So a quick play in the park until the coach arrived then we set off.

Our aim during our week at camp was just to let the girls relax and have fun in the 52 acres of woods, especially after the year we all had. The girls participated in a range of camp activities from zip wire, a climbing boulder, grass sledging and Go Wild! We also made a slip and slide for them, which was very popular. The girls worked together completing their Backwoods interest badge and their Skills Builder stage 4.





When we returned the girls back home to Littlehampton on the Friday, they were all shattered but very happy, with great memories of a fun but relaxed camp. And despite the weather during the week spirits had always been high.



The leaders then returned Herons Wood camp site to enjoy the activities for themselves. And eventually strike camp!

Donna Goncalves - Leader 1st Wick Guides
Anchie Parvin-Blackstone - Leader 2nd Littlehampton Guides



Happy Campers - 1st Yapton Guides

11 Guides and their Young Leaders enjoyed a fantastic weekend in June 'on camp' (they went home to sleep) and made the most of being able to do activities together. They tried hard to socially distance and follow all the guidelines; the girls were outside all the time and they still had lots of fun. The Guides went on a photo trail we called an 'ice cream hike' and of course managed to buy one at the shop. They did their own cooking and we had the opportunity to have a campfire with s'mores. It was lovely to be back together enjoying being at camp!!

Anna Drynan - Leader 1st Yapton Guides & Rangers



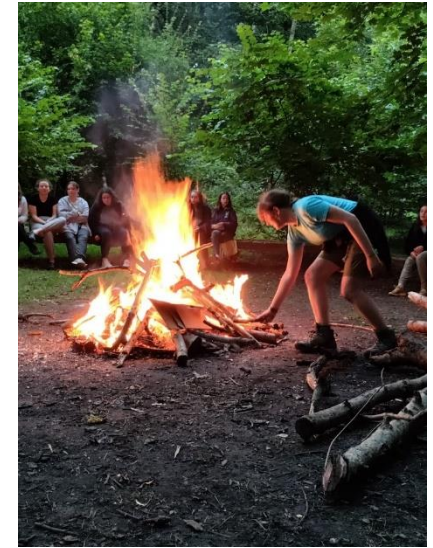
Here is what Amélie thought of the weekend's adventures:

My favourite part was making the slime, cooking and the Mini Olympics. I enjoyed these activities most because the slime was something different to do and it was so much fun to see the different colours. The cooking was so cool because we got to cook our own meal, my friend Hana even poached an egg! I also really liked the Mini Olympics because there were so many different challenges, like egg and spoon, bean bags and jumping bags. We also got given a challenge sheet which had things to complete, like wear your clothes inside out for a whole entire afternoon or morning, or help a leader without being asked. The person that completed the most challenges got a prize. I really enjoyed this too. **Amélie Strang**

Bognor Regis South District

We did it! Bognor Regis South District held a Guide and Ranger Summer camp. There were 22 Guides, 5 Rangers, 4 of our own children and 6 leaders, camping at The Spur in Slindon for 3 nights. The sun shone, the girls cooked outside, discovered the woods, had campfires, learnt new skills, played games in the dark and even slept outside one night. We enjoyed the basics of Guide camp and all of the restrictions and risk assessments were worth every minute of it!

Jo Evans - Leader 1st Bognor Regis Guides



Easebourne Brownies and Guides

Easebourne Brownies celebrated their 100th Birthday just before the end of term and we celebrated by having a party in the park with games and a picnic and a surprise treat of the Ice-cream van, (I have never seen the girls run so fast for ice cream!) We will continue our celebrations into the Autumn term when the girls are having a badge competition to commemorate this special event.



During the summer holidays Easebourne Brownies had two activity days instead of Brownie residential this year. We went to RSPB Pulborough Brooks and had a fabulous time pond dipping, setting moths free and we even found a couple of sleepy adders hidden on the heath, under special metal tins made for them to hide away. We also went for a walk, had more ice cream, a picnic and play in the park. The girls also navigated their way across the Brooks following the 'Owls' along the path way.



Our next day consisted of the County Campover Activities; a play in the park in the rain and we finished off our day with campfire cones and a pizza delivery. We had a great couple of days and look forward to going away properly in May next year with the girls.

Easebourne Guides had a fabulous time on camp this summer. We went to Blackland Farm and took part in a variety of activities including the Zip wire, Kayaking, Abseiling and Air Rifles, and the girls also orienteered their way around the site.

All the girls were very new to camping but that didn't stop them getting stuck into everything, from pitching tents to playing glowstick football, cooking their meals to splashing their poor leaders in the kayaks and swimming pool. It's safe to say both the girls and leaders enjoyed their Harry Potter themed camp and are very much looking forward to West Sussex International Jamboree next summer.



At the start of the summer we were offered a navigational day on Stedham and Iping Common, where the girls learnt how to use maps, use a compass and the different things to look for to help us find our way on a map.

We had a great time with both groups and learnt that we might be very good at map reading by the time we get to Halloween Hike later this year.



We also had two fabulous instructors come to our meeting, who work with the rescue dogs in West Sussex that are used to help find people if they get lost. They were very friendly and taught us lots and even enjoyed a few of our bourbon biscuits and custard creams! We had a great day and they said they would be happy to come back again.

Emma Glue - Leader Easebourne Brownies & Guides

Chanctonbury District step into the breach

Chanctonbury District stepped into the breach recently to provide a small youth presence at the Royal British Legion Torch 100 relay service in Storrington on 27th August.

The Torch of Remembrance had been crossing both East and West Sussex to mark 100 years of the Royal British Legion in Sussex.

Due to certain regulations in the Air Training Corps, the local squadron were unable to parade at the very last minute. It so happened that the local Girlguiding leaders found out about the event, made enquiries and were then able to step in to help, with less than 24hrs notice, for which the RBL were most grateful.

The Girlguiding units accepted the Torch of Remembrance from a veteran, 92 year old Wing CD-R (Rtd) John Bell MBE, DFCRBL, on behalf of the youth of Storrington, in front of local dignitaries in a short service in the churchyard of St Mary's Church Storrington.

And we have just heard that RBL have said they will be presenting us with one of their centenary bannerettes! We are very happy that they are showing their appreciation in this way.



Nicky Biscoe - Chanctonbury District Commissioner