



# EAST SURREY DISTRICT SCOUTS

Registered Charity No. 1032242. A Member of Tandridge Voluntary Service Council

District Commissioner – Nick Hough,  
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## District briefing – November 2016

This is the first time that I as the new District Commissioner have communicated with everyone in the District in this way. I'll try to keep this as short as possible. It was officially announced on Sunday 13 November that I will be the new DC East Surrey. The process of becoming DC started for me at the time of the 2016 District AGM. It continues to the present time, and will continue well into 2017. My involvement with the 1<sup>st</sup> Oxted will become less, but will not stop.

**My background:** I was a Cub at a big town Group in Derby East in the early 1970's. I was a Scout at a smaller church Group, 135<sup>th</sup> Derby (Broadway Baptist) in Derby North. In 1981 I was a founding member of a Venture Scout unit (Scorpion VSU) which survived into the late '90's. I was a non-uniformed assistant at Scouts between 1988 and 1991. In 1999 I took a Warrant as ACSL at the 135<sup>th</sup> Derby, and was a Assistant Cub leader there until I came to Oxted in 2005. I became involved at 1OX almost immediately as the Scout leader, and became GSL in 2009.

For 17 years until 2004, I worked as an electronic engineer offshore all over the world, in oil exploration. Today I work in London as a technical adviser for a trade association representing offshore engineering contractors. My work today is mainly in safety and in delivering good English. I live in Oxted; my wife and I have three grown-up children, of whom the youngest went through the Scout movement. I'm a Christian and a member of St Mary's church in Oxted.

Managing change in a diplomatic, positive and encouraging way, is something I've done professionally on several occasions, and it is something I have done at 1<sup>st</sup> Oxted this last 11 years. I'll finish with this: we should not over-estimate what can be achieved in one year – but do not under-estimate what can be achieved in five. One year from now things may not seem to have changed a great deal – but in 5 years we can be confident that District will be in much stronger shape than it is now. I'll do my best to involve everyone, and work towards ensuring that Groups that may have felt "at the edge of things" are not left out.

### Review of District as of now

Members of the District team and the District Executive can assist me in conducting a "warts and all" review of the District *as it is now*. This is to provide a baseline against which to measure progress and improvement over the coming years. The review will include a District "Red-Amber-Green" review as provided by TSA, and also a brainstorm on "SWOT" (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats).

### Dates: (subject to change!!)

District Exec – 12<sup>th</sup> December, Mill Lane – **uniform**

Cub leaders dinner – 6<sup>th</sup> January 2017, Croydon

**District Team meeting – Weds 11<sup>th</sup> January 2017, venue TBD**

Panto (Cubs/Beavers) – 13<sup>th</sup> January 2017, Oxted

Young leader training - 5<sup>th</sup> February, Oxted hut

District Exec – 15<sup>th</sup> February 2017, Mill Lane

Colditz (Scouts) – 18<sup>th</sup>/19<sup>th</sup> March 2017, Oxted School

### **Thank you**

First of all I should like to thank **everyone**. The District has been through a very difficult time in recent years, particularly the last 12 months or so. People have worked very hard to keep things going, in many cases going beyond the call of duty to ensure that safe and fun Scouting has continued. Without intending to neglect anyone else, I'd particularly like to thank Karen Rapson and Ann Holland for their work in holding things together.



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## Visits and chats

As DC I should like first of all to establish exactly WHO is District? To me, the District is people; it is all the Scouters and other volunteers working to provide safe and fun Scouting for young people. I'll be contacting as many of you as I can to come to you and have an informal chat. This is a chance for me to listen. You'll have the chance to bend my ear about any issues you may have. The easy fixes hopefully we can do quickly – the impossible may take a little longer. Please bear with...and feel free to contact me, by email or call, or use SMS, WhatsApp, or Messenger.

## Hurst Green

A central and non-negotiable part of my being the District Commissioner is that a Scout Group is established again in Hurst Green. I will look for everyone to support that aim; East Surrey District, County and TSA will all work together on that. A first step will be to establish a working group which will be empowered initially to look at some of the challenges involved in getting a Group going again, and provide reports back to me and the District Executive.

## District website

The existing District website <http://eastsurreydistrictscouts.webs.com/> is inadequate, off-brand, and out of date. I have made some small and appropriate updates to it - we need it for the moment.

Once the County media team have provided input to a new and on-brand site, the old site will be removed. The new site will be [www.eastsurreydistrictscouts.org.uk/](http://www.eastsurreydistrictscouts.org.uk/)

I shall provide a similar briefing at regular intervals henceforth, intended initially for Group Scout Leaders, Group contacts, Chairs and Secretaries of Group Executives as appropriate, and members of the District Executive.

Many thanks  
Nick Hough  
District Commissioner, East Surrey Scouts

## Making it easy for volunteers

An important part of successful Scouting is that we make it as easy as possible for volunteers to take part. As far as possible, we come to where they are – they don't come to where we are. One of the ways in which District will make it easy for Scouters to attend District level meetings, is that District meetings will finish at 9.45pm promptly. This may take some firm chairing of meetings. I guarantee that in time we will reap the benefits – in increased attendance and contribution from Scouters – of finishing meetings promptly. For most if not all of us, tomorrow is just another working day. Your family and your work are more important than Scouting.

## Motivation

I would like to ask that everyone takes a moment to examine their motivation for being involved in Scouting. Why are we here? Why are you here? I need you to get beyond "*we're only doing this for the kids*", and reflect upon, and better understand, the deep motivation that enables you to continue each week.