



## County Commissioner's Message - Chris Ward

I hope that despite the pandemic impacting on how you and your families would normally enjoy the festive season that you managed to make the most of it and are now looking forward with hope into 2021.

This newsletter edition covers aspects of virtual scouting (given that is all we can offer in Tier 4) provides a "Face to Face" (F2F) summary and an update re the census. It is being sent by e-mail to all those who have a role with Cambridgeshire Scouts on COMPASS, as everyone needs to ensure they are aware of the relevant current guidance no matter the role held.

Please take time to read the most recent advice from The Scouts. Also note that previous F2F risk assessments approved should be reviewed regularly, as a venue change or moving indoors may mean that some need updating.

A more routine newsletter will be issued towards the end of January, and once we have confirmation that F2F can start again a summary of the rules etc at that time will also be shared. Please note that due to constant changes if you decide to print off hardcopies of any relevant information you must ensure it always current.

Together we all continue to have a part to play in ensuring that we support each other and our local communities, whilst protecting ourselves and those around us as best we can by following the Government guidance.

I know that the weeks and months ahead will lead us to the time when we can re-start face to face scouting again, and until then please do check your scouting e-mails / scouting social media for hints, tips and advice that may of use both now and for when that time comes.

In the meantime, take care of yourselves and those around you - stay safe.

## Census - 31<sup>st</sup> January 2021

This national census follows the pattern of previous years but with a tighter deadline for completion. All Group, District and County returns must have been submitted AND approved well in advance of when the census site closes on the 21<sup>st</sup> February. General information about every aspect of completing the census is at [census guidance](#). Due to the impact of the pandemic there will some additional questions around finances. In early January passwords etc will be sent to relevant volunteers, and the census site then opens on the 14<sup>th</sup> January.

We know from the "mini-census" returns that not all our youth members have been taking part in online or face to face activities. You must record all present youth members that will be returning to Scouting at some point in 2021, even if not currently taking part. This means that before the end of January you must contact the parents / carers parents of all those young people – and if they will not be returning in 2021 you need to remove them from your records and offer their place to someone on the waiting list. Please read this [clear guidance](#), which also includes template wording to use when contacting parents and carers.

# Virtual Scouting

## Types of virtual scouting

During 2020 there has been an increasing range of youth activities, nights away, events, adult training and team meetings take place using a huge variety of platforms and formats.

Even though F2F meetings, activities and events cannot take place there is certainly plenty of evidence to suggest that even infrequent virtual scouting can be great fun, keep scouting “alive” and help the mental health and general well-being of young people and adults alike.

Whilst it can all appear quite daunting to start with there is lots of help and support available, including [helpful webinars](#), ready-made virtual sessions and even complete plans that you can download.

A good place to start is on The Scouts website in the section about [taking scouting on-line](#) (this includes online safety information, such as things to consider before recording any such session).

The County Training team have also been delivering a range of wood badge courses throughout, so please check the [county website](#) for forthcoming dates.

## Platforms available

There [are a range of suitable options](#) you can consider if you haven't yet done so, or if you wonder if there is something more suited to the way you would like to run things. The Scouts secured [a deal with Zoom](#) so that everyone could benefit from using this option at no cost for a specified period.

## Support available

Whether you are only now thinking about running some virtual scouting, or have become quite an expert during 2020, then why not see what resources are available to help you for Spring 2021.

The Scouts website has a range of events and ready to use activities such as [Press, Play and Go](#), [Winter Camp 2021](#), [Activities](#) (which include lots of online ones for all Sections). There is also the [East of England Winter Challenge](#).

For those on social media there are lots of resources (including in the file section of each one) and ideas in various closed groups. Here are just some examples (and if you have anything to share please do add as you rummage!):

- Cambridgeshire – [all adults in the county](#), [Beaver leadership](#), [Cub leadership](#), [Scout leadership](#), [Explorer leadership](#), [Network](#) and [D of E](#)
- National – the special [1st Virtual Scout Group](#) (which has thousands of ideas - entire plans, videos on using Zoom, links and topics from drawing to cooking!) as well as the usual, [1st Facebook Scout Group](#), [1st Beaver Scout Colony](#), [1st Facebook Cub Pack](#), [1st Facebook Explorer Leaders](#), [UK Scout Network](#)

There are also virtual programme ideas on Online Scout Manager (OSM) for those that use it.

There are then lots of resources and sessions available (free / paid) from a huge range of other sources such as [Cambridgeshire Library Service](#), [Army Flying Museum](#), [Scoutadelic](#), [Scoutadelic Virtual Adventure Pack](#), [Big Man in the Woods](#) and [Pawprint Family](#) to name just a few. Then there are events you can link to badge work such as the [RSPB's Big Garden Birdwatch](#).

Your own District may also already be offering virtual events, such as the Crafts Hill District Cub Quiz (relevant leaders there will already have received an e-mail with details). Districts are increasingly arranging buddying for those Sections / Groups less confident delivering on-line programmes to be linked up with other local scouting volunteers, to share their experience of engaging and fun virtual sessions. Please contact your Assistant District Commissioner (Section) or District Commissioner.

In addition to all of the above, and your wider District team, then for virtual scouting you can also contact [f2freturn@cambridgeshirescouts.org.uk](mailto:f2freturn@cambridgeshirescouts.org.uk) (even though the address is f2f) if you are unsure where to start, have specific queries or would just like some general guidance.

## Examples of virtual scouting from 2020

If you have been running virtual scouting perhaps you wonder whether it is worth it or are looking for inspiration? Perhaps you have not tried your hand at virtual scouting because you are short of time or simply not sure where to start? Look at page 2, rummage on the links etc provided and then take a look at just a few examples below.

**50<sup>th</sup> Cambridge** have been busy with their virtual scouting – everything from recreating a famous sporting moment, making honeycomb, building egg podiums and getting creative with their Yule Logs to name but a few!



Across **Hinchingbrooke District** they have enjoyed a range of virtual activities. There was a Remembrance Day Bake Off (with Shona from 1<sup>st</sup> Kimbolton the worthy winner), some lucky Beaver Scouts enjoyed a Zoom call with a duck (thanks to the Waterfowl Sanctuary) and they are already planning their next themed virtual District day along the lines of Ocean Adventure.



**Explorer Scouts** from across Cambridgeshire were invited to “It’s Virtually Christmas”, a virtual Christmas Party weekend. More details in our next issue.

And to finish here is some lovely feedback from a parent, who has a son, George, with **1<sup>st</sup> Somersham** (Georgie has already shared all the camp files on [Facebook](#), to use as is or amend to your own theme perhaps)

“Just wanted to write to let you know how amazing our leaders have been. They have endeavored to keep the meetings going via Zoom which have been wonderful for my son, who LOVES Cubs so much and would have really missed it. George has enjoyed learning how to take care of hedgehogs, how to tie knots and all about Diwali. A fabulous, exciting array of activities that have kept him interested as well as connected to his friends. We have been lucky to benefit from working with the Beaver Scout Leader, Georgie Godby too who has organised many exciting events. The latest of these took place this weekend: the Minecraft virtual camp. She wrote a great, comprehensive handbook that detailed all the events and activities to guide us through it. With Frances Sewell (our fab Cub leader), we were provided with materials to make a lantern then the children made a camp in their homes. We even had a singsong via Zoom! Finally, in the morning after making a “healing potion” for breakfast, we went out to take part in a trail collecting letters around the Nature Reserve that had been placed there early that morning by Georgie. It was a wonderful weekend, and we feel very lucky to have such wonderfully committed leaders who are happy to donate their time in this way. Lockdown would not have been as easy without this for my son, George. Many, many thanks.”



We would like to share what the rest of you have been up to / have planned, and have more examples of the great feedback we know many of you will have received – please send details to [communications@cambridgeshirescouts.org.uk](mailto:communications@cambridgeshirescouts.org.uk)



# Face to Face Scouting – Be Prepared

## Status of Cambridgeshire Scouting

### RED – no F2F meetings, events or activities are permitted

Prior to entering Tier 4 it was great to note that 179 Sections already had approval to restart F2F scouting. There had also been some highly successful District events, such as Ely's Scout Hike and Hinchingbrooke's Space Day.

### A brief overview of F2F to help prepare for its return

The [Scouts Framework](#) is aligned with Government approved guidance for the youth sector developed by the [National Youth Agency](#) (NYA):

- Before a Section (or Unit) can restart F2F meetings / events a (COVID-safe) risk assessment must be submitted via the Smart sheets system and receive formal approval from the relevant District / County approver. Adult only meetings must follow Government guidelines and require line manager approval before they can take place.
- Allow sufficient time for this process, including clarification of queries that may arise and, following approval, for [parental consent](#) (see Step 3) to be obtained based on the approved COVID-safe measures.
- The guidance includes details about numbers as well as when and, by whom, face coverings must be worn
- All Members need to read and keep up to date with the relevant changing HQ guidance, which is now web-based material only (any old booklets and leaders' checklists are obsolete and must no longer be used).
- Provided the [Scouts Framework](#) is fully adhered to then insurance and liability aspects are covered.

### Additional resources, tools, ideas and support

The Scouts website has a wealth of information:

- [Information for leaders](#) – 5 step process that must be followed by all leaders. This includes useful videos on preparing and submitting your risk assessments and restart programmes.
- [Information for Commissioners, Executives and Approvers](#)
- [Information for parents](#)
- [Information for working safely with the public](#)
- [Brand Centre](#) – has various items that meet COVID-19 safety guidelines.
- [Where to meet and how to get there](#)
- [Keeping our buildings safe and secure](#)
- [Planning a safe and enjoyable programme](#) and look at the [COVID secure activities too](#)
- [Advice on adapting activities](#)
- [COVID-19 safe programme ideas](#)
- [Protecting ourselves and others](#)
- [Knowing what to do if something goes wrong](#)
- [Guidance for getting adults involved again](#)
- [Guidance on reopening campsites and activity centres](#)
- [Doing the DofE](#)
- [Communicating with people](#)
- [Advice on adapting activities](#)
- [COVID-19 restart checklist](#) – this simple step by step guide is for leaders to work through the process of returning to F2F scouting. It helps you track your progress in getting your section back together and its use is recommended. Attaching a copy to Smart Sheets with your Risk Assessment may help speed up a decision.
- [Nights away and international travel](#)
- [COVID safe first aid training](#) – then visit the [county website calendar](#) for forthcoming dates
- [Frequently Asked Questions \(FAQs\)](#)
- Examples of how to complete the restart risk assessments [Example 1](#), [Example 2](#), [Example 3](#)

For those on social media there are lots of resources (including in the file sections) and ideas in various closed Facebook groups - see suggested groups on Page 2.

If you use Online Scout Manager (OSM) then you will find suitable resources and additional tools (such as parental consent) on there, depending on the package you pay for.

In addition to all of the above, and your wider District team, then for virtual scouting you can also contact [f2freturn@cambridgeshirescouts.org.uk](mailto:f2freturn@cambridgeshirescouts.org.uk) if you are unsure where to start, have specific queries or would just like some general guidance.