Girlguiding Essex South East Annual Report March 2018 – February 2019

A lot of changes have again taken place over the last year, both within Girlguiding Essex South East and Girlguiding nationally.

In September 2018, Girlguiding launched the long-awaited new programme. This involves all young members completing Skills Builders and Unit Meeting activities at a range of different levels although the ‘old programme’ continued to run alongside for 12 months. As a County we bought a complete set of Skill Builder cards and UMA cards for every District and a copy of the relevant handbooks book for each unit to encourage leaders to try the new programme. We also bought the set 4 UMA’s for every District when they were released in February.

The County Training Team ran a series of trainings for each Division on the new programme during the Autumn term which were all very well attended. On 28th April the County again held a very successful County Training Day at Sweyne Park School which was well attended by leaders who also gave very positive feedback about the day. First Response and Safe Space trainings have also continued to be run throughout the year.

May 2018 saw the introduction of the new GDPR laws affecting the way we hold and share data. Fortunately, GO had ensured we were already a long way to being data compliant but it did take a while to adapt to the new laws. Girlguiding also introduced a new style REN form for any leader taking girls away overnight as well as a new Safe Space Training at 4 different levels.

The young members in Essex South East have had the opportunity to take part in a variety of events throughout the year. The outdoor team ran a successful night hike ‘The Bunny Hop Extravaganza’ in April at Watt Tyler Country Park. Many Guide and Ranger Teams took part in the event which was won by teams from Rayleigh Division. Also, in April, the girls completing their BP Challenge spent time in London visiting Escape rooms and enjoying a tour of The Houses of Parliament. In July, the County held an International Opportunities Evening for girls wishing to go on International trips with Girlguiding. Selected girls then went on to the Anglia Region selection which took place at Pax Lodge where girls were selected to go to Our Cabana in Mexico in the summer of 2019 and to the European Jamboree in Poland during the summer of 2020.

In September, many Rangers and Young Leaders took part in Strawberry Jam, a camp held at Belchamps Scout Campsite, where they had the opportunity to take part in a range of activities. In October, the Brownies had an outdoor activities day also at Belchamps where they had the opportunity to take part in activities such as climbing, circus skills and completing the assault course. The Rainbows attended an International Day in November, enjoying a variety of craft activities from around the world as well as learning to use Maori sticks and learning songs and games from around the world. Also, in November, the Guides and Brownies were able to attend a craft Dabble Day.

At the end of February 2019, after over 30 years as our County Treasurer, Angela Jones decided to take a step back and we thank her for all her hard work during her time as treasurer.

This review has only mentioned the activities which have taken place at County level and has not included the many and varied events organised by the Divisions, Districts and individual units, from sleepovers to swimming galas, community service projects to adventurous activities. We have over 200 units which deliver good guiding, week in and week out, giving our young members the chance to experience fun & adventure and make their voices heard, all within a safe, girl only environment.

Alison Tompkinson – County Commissioner for Girlguiding Essex South East