Annual Review Report for Girlguiding Essex South East – June 2018

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

In September, Girlguiding introduced its new data base, the updated version of GO. This had many glitches initially and took some getting used but most members are now quite happy to use it on a regular basis. This new version of GO also made sure that we were data compliant by the time the new GDPR Regulations came into effect in May this year. Girlguiding has also introduced new REN forms for those taking girls away as well as introducing new online training modules for Safe Space which all leaders will need to complete.

Essex South East were please to welcome Julie back as a temporary County Commissioner, following Pam’s move to Cornwall and we are grateful for the time she gave to the County again. I was appointed as the new County Commissioner and took up my role on October 1st.

The young members in Essex South East have had the opportunity to take part in a variety of events this year. Many of the Senior Section spent a weekend at Strawberry Jam held at Belchamps in September and at an evening campfire at Guideacres in January. Many Guides and Senior Section members were part of Southend Gang Show, attending rehearsals from October until show week in February half term. BP Adventures for Guides continued to run termly with girls taking part in a Monopoly Challenge, a visit to the Houses of Parliament and Escape Rooms, an afternoon tea and the London Film Scavenger Hunt. This last very successful event also included Senior Section members.

In January about 130 Brownies and their leaders travelled to Butlins, Skegness for Starburst where they took part in a wide range of activities including circus skills and STEM activities while the Rainbows continued their 30th birthday celebrations up to the end of the summer. Other activities organised for the girls included Pudding Day, Kids Kingdom, a Night Hike and a craft Dabble Day.

The Jack Petchey Awards Evening was again held in January at the Towngate Theatre in Basildon and were entertained by girls from 2 Senior Section groups as well as Southend Gang Show. The Annual Awards evening was held in June when BP awards were presented to 19 Guides, Chief Guide Challenge Awards were awarded to 4 Senior Section girls and a total of 41 awards were given to deserving leaders.

Leaders attended a variety of trainings at the County Training Day as well as attending Safe Space, First Response and Section trainings at other times. The Trefoil Guilds in the County have continued to be very active and joined together just a few days ago for a fundraising Garden Party in support of Riding for the Disabled.

There were also opportunities for International travel. Last summer, a group from Wickford and South Woodham Ferrers visited Our Chalet in Switzerland and a leader from Westcliff lead the Region trip to Nepal. Last July, several Senior Section members had the opportunity to attend a selection weekend for International travel. Three of them went on to be selected for the World Scout Jamboree in America in 2019 and another is going to Sangam in August this year.

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, from sleepovers to swimming galas, community service projects to adventurous activities, and in several cases this summer, Royal wedding celebrations. 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.

As I am writing this, we are less than 3 weeks away from the launch of the new programme for all sections including the reorganisation for the 18 to 30 year olds. I would like to encourage leaders to embrace the changes and start to use the new materials in the coming months.

Alison Tompkinson – County Commissioner for Girlguiding Essex South East