Girlguiding Essex South East Annual Report March 2019 – February 2020

Following all the changes introduced during the previous year, Girlguiding Essex South East spent the year 2019 – 2020 embedding the changes. The new programme materials were gradually being introduced and used in meetings during the first part of 2019 before becoming compulsory in September 2019. Having bought every District a set of the available new materials when they were initially released, in May 2019 when the next set of Unit Meeting Activity cards were released the County purchased a set for every unit. Another set were released in September 2019 but this time the County provided them for all new units and any units identified by local commissioners as being in need.

The County Training Team continued to run trainings on the new programme as well as continuing First Response and Safe Space trainings throughout the year. On 23rd March 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. The County Training Team also held a County Lite training Day in October where First Response and Safe Space Trainings were offered.

The young members in Essex South East have had the opportunity to take part in a variety of events throughout the year. Both Southend Gang Show and Basildon and Billericay Gang Show held very successful ‘Shows in a Day’ in March where young members rehearsed and performed a show all in one day supported by adult members. Both Gang Shows begun rehearsals for their full shows at the start of October. Rehearsals continued twice weekly until February half term when Southend Gang Show performed six very successful shows. Basildon Gang Show was due to be performed in April 2020. In April 2019, several Guides took part in one of the last opportunities to complete their BP Challenge weekend entitled ‘Give Us a Clue’ before that part of the old programme was phased out. This was followed by another opportunity to complete the BP Challenge at Stubbers in July.

September was a very busy month with four County events taking place! Three Brownie Rambles were held across the county where 250 girls walked to raise money in support of the Macmillan charity and received a Mile for Macmillan Badge. Also, in September, the County held a launch event for the new 18 – 30 programme which was well attended by members within this age range. They were able to find out what the Girlguiding offer was as well as having an opportunity to say what that would like to see happening for them within the County. Another September event saw many Rangers and Young Leaders again taking part in Strawberry Jam, a camp held at Belchamps Scout Campsite, where they had the opportunity to take part in a range of adventurous activities as well as some craft. Also, in September, 20 teams of Guides from across the county took part in the Chennells Trophy Competition help at one of our local campsites.

The Outdoor team held another very successful Pudding Day at Guideacres in October. This was well attended by teams of Guides who all successfully made a pudding over an open fire. During a week in November, many Rainbows, Brownies and Guides attended a session at Kids Kingdom when the whole building is booked out just for them.

In May, 4 adult leaders from the County were honoured to be part of the support team for Anglia Region working at Buckingham Palace for one of the Queen’s Garden Parties. In July, adult leaders attended Village Green Fair with stalls of activities for young visitors to try. This was also supported by several of the local Rangers.

During this year, many of our adult members have been involved in the planning of Essex International Jamboree, a camp organised jointly with Essex Scouts for approx. 10,000 participants due to take place in the summer of 2020.

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