

February 2024

GSL's Update



Well the first part of the term in 2024 has already passed, with a District Party for Beavers, Cub Quiz, Frost Camp for Scouts.

The Group had a busy time in December, Explorers helping at the Claygate Lights, the Band playing at the Princes Alice Hospice, the Cubs going in force to the Pantomime at Epsom and the Group assisting the community with the taking down of the Claygate Lights. I mention these as they may not get mentioned elsewhere. The remainder of the newsletter will provide the detail of the Group's activities since the last Newsletter.

What more for 2024?

We have our annual Group Camp 17 – 19th May 2024, the leaders will be issuing information prior to Easter, definitely a date for the diary. Cubs have their District camp 14-16th June, closely followed by the Surrey County Camp for Scouts on 28 – 30 June. If your child has been to Bazzaz or Scram (the County Cub and Beaver events) they will not want to miss this one.

We then have the Camps in Oxfordshire for Cubs, Yorkshire for the Scouts and Morocco for the Explorers.

There is something for everyone with the Claygate Beer Festival set for the 30-31 August 2024

Lots of fundraising took place over the Christmas period, more details inside. We are very pleased to share that:

- Cubs made items for sale at the Claygate Christmas lights and raised £350 for the RSPCA
- Scouts provided a Christmas Post Service within the Village and raised £350 for the Claygate Hub.
- Collection for Oxfam Gaza Emergency Response which raised £300.

The band also played carols around the streets of Claygate collecting funds. This has allowed the Group to double the money raised for the RSPCA and the Claygate Hub - our causes selected by the Scouts and Cubs respectively.

It is so pleasing that we can deliver support to others at such a busy time and remember **'to help other people'** is part of our promise.

I wanted to share some recent feedback that I received:

"Thank you so much for making this weekend's Frost Camp such an enjoyable time. I know how much hard work goes into making these camps happen and we really appreciate all of those who gave up their weekends to make this such a success."

"We hear about all the activities and were proudly shown the target from the shooting."

I will be running some **'meet the GSL sessions'** for parents in the weeks up to Easter - a separate letter will be issued about those sessions.

Hugh



District Beaver Party 2024

The yearly Esher District Beaver Party took place on the 3rd of February. We had 190 Beavers attending.

This year, the activities and theatre show were themed around **The Wonderful Wizard of Oz**, a story about a girl named Dorothy and her dog Toto trying to get home from the magical land of Oz and the friends she meets along the way, a scarecrow trying to obtain a brain, a Lion looking for courage and a tin man who wants a heart.

It was a great afternoon of fun and excitement.

The Beavers got involved by playing various roles such as Munchkins, Toto the dog, corn flowers and dancers.

Much to the delight of the Beavers, even one of the leaders had to play the part of Lady of the Wardrobe dressed in a golden turban. There was plenty of laughing all around.

The Beavers' favourite character was Moomoo, a cow up to all sort of mischief including shrinking socks in the 'wachingmooochine'.



During the activities Beavers made masks, a puppet, decorated lion biscuits and played some games including taking Toto for a 'walk' in the parachute game.

We thank Oliver, Andy, Simon, and Tom (Beaver parents) who kindly helped out and all our Beaver Leaders for their commitment to create a memorable experience for the Beavers.





Beavers Christmas Angels

It all started back in July when the Beaver Leaders met to discuss the programme for the Autumn Term. We had been through the Beaver Crafts storage boxes in the Red Store and wanted to 'use up' some of the things, or at least record what was there. On the list were some battery-operated tea lights which sparked the interest of the crafters amongst us. Since Graham, one of our Group Vice Presidents and a former cub and Cub Scout Leader in the Group, had moved to a nursing home we thought it would be a nice idea to make something for the elderly folk at his home who might not have anyone to visit them over Christmas. It sounds easy but it took a while for us to decide what would turn out best in the hands of 6 and 7 year olds. It boiled down to a choice between a poinsettia and an angel – the angel won and so after making several prototypes from various materials the gold vellum light-up angel was designed! There are still many things to decide: will the small jewels we have stick to the vellum and what about using glitter – would that be too messy? How would we stand them up giving access to switch the light on? How would we wrap them?

After seeking permission from the Home Manager we settled on the morning of Saturday 16th December to visit the home with 40 of the angels to give to the residents. When the day finally arrived a small group of Beavers (14) and a couple of sibling cubs met outside the home at 10.30. The staff had assembled those residents who could walk, in the lounge and the Beavers were invited to join them. They were so looking forward to seeing us. I explained that we were all from 1st Claygate Scout Group where Graham had been a member for over 70 years and those Beavers who were brave enough introduced themselves giving their name and age. What a delight to find that our Beaver named Ivy was able to give the angel she had made to resident also named Ivy! Every Beaver gave an angel to 2 elderly residents and some went with their mums and an assistant to deliver to those people who were unable to leave their rooms. After an impromptu rendition of 'We wish you a Merry Christmas' led by Raven the Beavers were invited to check out the London Taxi cab which is part of the Sensory garden before saying goodbye.

I shall never forget seeing Dougie give one resident a big hug. The feeling of joy in the room was immense and we have been asked if we would go back at Easter! I'd like to thank all the Beavers who took such

care making the angels and all the leaders, assistants and parents who helped at meetings and on the day. A special thank you to our President John Baldwin who arranged for the remaining angels to be delivered to elderly residents with their Meals on Wheels.



Cubs County Quiz



This year’s District round of the County Cub Quiz was very competitive, with only a handful of points between the top 5 teams.

Well done to the teams from Lion & Panthers who turned in very respectable results.

Congratulations go to Purple Six of Lynx Pack who came first!

They beat the leader’s team who were wiped out by the music round.

The Team from Lynx will be attending the County Final on the 25th February, so watch this space for an update on their progress.

Akela, Lion Pack
Catherine Hackett

Do you know your Topic from a Picnic????

How well would you have done on this year picture round?
(Answers on the back page)

KEN'S CHOCOLATE QUIZ

Can you name the chocolate bars that are pictured below?



Cubs Fundraising at the Christmas Lights

Each year, as part of the “Our World Challenge” badgework, one of the cub packs propose some charities that they would like to support. All the cub packs then vote to choose which charity will be supported, via a secret ballot. (It is surprisingly difficult to explain to the cubs that they should make up their own minds as to which charity they should support and not just go along with the charity their friends are supporting!) In 2023 the cubs chose to support the RSPCA.

The main way the cubs raise funds is through making and selling items at the Claygate Christmas Lights and you may have spotted the cub stall under the 1st Claygate gazebo. During the meetings in the week before the Christmas Lights (and with much needed parent support,) Lion pack made stained glass window biscuits, Lynx pack made mince pies, and Panther pack made the ever popular hot chocolate reindeer cones. The older cubs (usually sixers and seconders) are invited to come and help on the stall selling the items the cubs have made. This time Lion pack also raised further funds by inviting friends and family to their “Cubs Got Talent” evening.

The cubs raised a total of **£344.52 for the RSPCA.**

Cubs Panto

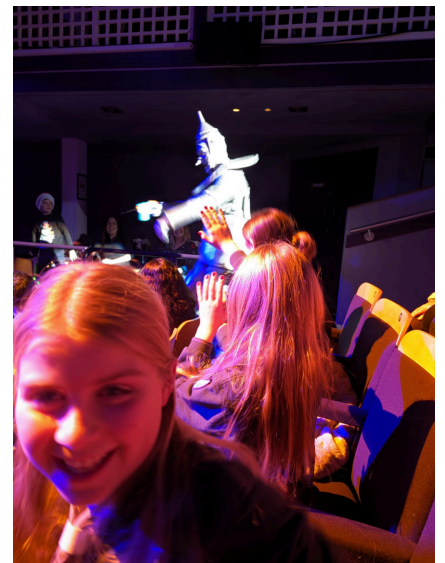
The cubs were all excited to attend the Wizard of Oz panto at Epsom Playhouse before Christmas.

The cubs all looked very smart in their uniforms and we were lucky to get 2 rows in the middle of the theatre with great views. We were all impressed with the dancers, especially the younger troupe of children. There were also lots of great songs and funny jokes to keep us amused.

The cubs seemed to love the half time snacks and drinks which were provided by the leaders. As tradition would dictate, we all got soaked with the water guns when they sprayed the audience.

The whole day out was topped off with 3 of our Claygate cubs ending the show on the stage with the scarecrow.

Our cubs thoroughly entertained the whole crowd with their great personalities and dance moves!



Christmas Help - Thank you!



Thanks for all the help at Christmas

Thanks you to all those helped at putting up and taking down the Christmas trees around the village without the Scout Groups support it just would not happen.

It was another great year for christmas trees sale with almost 500 unloaded , labelled and delivered. It is our second biggest fundraising event and without all your help it just would not happen.

Hope to see those that helped and many others at the events later in the year. We could always do with more help at both of these events

Mark Aulds

Christmas Post!

The Scouts ran a Christmas Post service in the village again this year. This is a long-standing event in our calendar, apart from a break during Covid. Seven yellow post boxes were placed around the village for residents to post their cards to Claygate addresses along with a 40p fee.

Parents helped collect and sort the post and the Scouts delivered the cards around the village. The last couple of years has seen a decline in the sending of cards generally and we see this also in the Scout post. But we were still kept busy and got a good result, taking £350 which goes to charity, this year the Claygate Hub.



Kings Scout Award

The latest member of 1st Claygate Scout Group to submit his Queen's Scout Award to the National team for approval is David Grosse, currently a member of Network. We look forward to seeing photos of him receiving his award and visiting Windsor Castle on St George's Day later this year.

The now Kings Scout Award is the highest achievement a Young Person can gain in scouting. Both Surrey Scouts and Claygate Scouts are focussed on ensuring that our members' achievements are recognised towards this goal and that our Explorer Scouts have the opportunities to gain their KSA.

If you want to learn more about this work or to help with it, please contact Graham Copland Cale, Jonathan Perkins or Hugh Gostling.



Explorers Update



The autumn term was an extremely busy one for the Explorer unit, we welcomed a record number of new members, these new members varied from Scouts who had been a part of the group since Beavers to those who had never attended 1st Claygate before. The incredible attendance of the Explorer meetings is largely thanks to the incredible work of our leaders who create an interesting and varied programme.

At the very beginning of September, the unit did exceedingly well in the cooking competition, managing to cook a two-course meal that did in fact look quite edible much to our surprise; the younger Explorers really pulled through their skills and delivered.

We had a theme of first aid throughout the term as well, creating interesting and realistic scenarios to evaluate how well the Explorers could cope when put on the spot. Graham even invited one of his colleagues along to test how the Explorers would react to a stranger attacking one of our leaders and how willing they were to administer first aid to this stranger. We also staged a car crash with smoke cannisters down at the fire station to see how well the group would bind together to save a life. Overall, the success of the first aid was extremely varying, but a valuable lesson for us to learn about the realities of first aid away from a classroom situation.

Another feature of our term was an Explorer-led game. Evie and Nicole set up a wide game across Claygate using *Life360* (a location sharing app), allowing the Explorers to hunt the pair across Claygate. One of the key observations of the night was how observant the members were: some having more patience to search more thoroughly therefore managed to attain the prize of finding the pair far earlier than those without this patience. An exciting evening for all.

Halloween happened to fall on a Tuesday this year and the unit took the opportunity to dress up and our leaders certainly did not disappoint: Graham's mad monk was particularly terrifying. The unit played some fun Halloween games.

We even ventured out onto the ice rink last year, the varying skillsets of the group were on full display. A few well-trained explorers enjoyed whizzing past the others much to their annoyance, while others were much more familiar with the cold ice as they fell over more times than they stood up. As ever, apart from our safety, Graham's only concern was how to get the perfect picture as we all went round, even if he captured an embarrassing fall.

Also, in the run up to Christmas, the Explorers enjoyed a trip up to London to see the lights and walk around the markets, whilst also having a photo competition. Finally, we held our traditional Christmas party in the last meeting before the holidays, when we played a selection of games and enjoyed eating our fair share festive food.

Overall, it has been a great start to the year with the Explorer unit and we are all looking forward to the exciting things planned for the rest of this year.



A note from Graham Copland-Cale, Explorer Leader:

Thank you, Evie and Nicole, for the above article letting people know what the Explorers have been up to. Modest as always, Nicole and Evie have also been working hard on achieving their Top Scouting Awards. Both have already gained their Young Leaders Belt and now they are both working to complete the last elements of their King Scout Award, the highest award in scouting. As a Unit we have a good percentage of our Explorers working towards their Top Scouting Awards (including the Young leader Award, DofE (Bronze, Silver & Gold) and the King Scout Award. So, it's not all playing games and whizzing around on the ice:

Well done to all in the Unit!



Fundraising & Finance 24



Fundraising

One of our biggest fundraising events of the year is the sale of Christmas Trees. This year we had orders for almost 500 trees and wreaths. Once delivered by our supplier these have to be unpacked, sorted, labelled and then delivered over 3 weeks in December. We are grateful to the many parents and friends who help us to organise this, both the heavy lifting (an 8ft tree is not light!) and by driving vehicles to deliver around Claygate and Esher.

This is followed in January by the first of our three annual Jumble Sales. Thanks in particular to Sandra and John who organise the event, and the many helpers who come along to sort, sell and manage the sale.

Our next big fundraising events are the Jumble Sale on 27th April, the Bedding Plant Sale on 11th/12th May and the Claygate Flower Show on 13th July. And don't forget the Claygate Beer Festival scheduled for 30th and 31st August – the ideal way to end what will hopefully be a fun-filled summer for everyone.

Fundraising – what we use the money for

Of course, we raise funds for a reason. Our termly subs pay for the day-to-day management of the Scout Centre – insurance, gas and electricity, cleaning, maintenance etc. But the fundraising is needed to support our capital expenditure programme. This year has been especially busy:

- Last summer we replaced our 15-year old minibus which finally became unrepairable – the wonderful 'silver' minibus has been working well since and is a welcome addition to our vehicle fleet. Cost £42,000.
- Over half term we added new solar panels to the Scout Centre, with batteries. This will enable us to reduce our energy bills substantially, and also make some money from selling surplus energy back to the grid. We are fortunate that our main roof faces south, so we can maximise the benefit of the panels. We've received substantial grants from Surrey County Council and Claygate Parish Council, but we still used £17,000 our fundraising effort to complete the work.
- We have added a new toilet on the first floor which will provide nearer facilities for users of our new upstairs meeting room. Cost £13,000.

Subs and donations

Despite the substantial capital expenditure we have incurred in the last 12 months, we have managed to keep the annual subs increase to just £1 per term, from £51 to £52 for the period April 2024 to March 2025. We can do this because the Trustee Board regularly monitors and manages our finances to maintain adequate reserves to cover risks that we may face in future.

But this does mean that fundraising will continue to play an important part in ensuring that our Scout Group continues to thrive. We particularly encourage any parent who works for a company that provides grants to charities that they are associated with – either directly or through fundraising 'matching' schemes – to consider applying for those grants on behalf of 1st Claygate Scouts. If you need any help or advice doing this, please get in touch with our Treasurer (treasurer@claygatescouts.org).



Busy time in the Band



The last couple of months of 2023 were busy ones for the Band, performing at a wide range of events.

Brookwood Military Cemetery

In early November, the Band supported Scouts from Woking District in leading their annual parade at the Brookwood Military Cemetery. This is a poignant parade which remembers those who have lost their lives in armed conflicts around the world. The Band's presence undoubtedly adds to the occasion. A flawless 'Last Post' was performed by the Band's trumpeter, Edward Smith.

Lord Mayor's Show, Central London

The following weekend saw the Band leave Claygate at 7:15am on Saturday morning on route to central London to take part in the Lord Mayor's Show through Central London. This is a huge event for the band, performing in front of thousands of people through the heart of London.

Nearly 7,000 people take part in the parade itself, along with 200 horses and more than 150 floats. The procession stretches three miles and passes the Mansion House, St Paul's Cathedral and the Royal Courts of Justice before returning to Mansion House via Victoria Embankment.

The Band looked and sounded great – a massive achievement for everyone involved.

Remembrance Parade, Claygate

Having arrived back in Claygate at around 6pm on Saturday evening, everyone had only a few hours to get their uniform back into tip-top condition for the Remembrance Day parade in Claygate – one of the most important events of the year for the band and one where we always strive to achieve the highest standards. Will Smith, our trumpeter playing the Last Post, once again rose to the occasion, and the whole band played (and marched) superbly well.

Christmas 2023

December is always the band's busiest time of the year, and this year was no exception. But the Christmas season actually began in mid-November when the band supported the Christmas Fair at the Claygate Day Centre. A couple of weeks later, the band entertained the crowds at the Christmas Lights switch-on event in the Parade.

The following Sunday the band split in half to support two important events that were taking part at the same time.

As usual, the Band led the carol singing on the Village Green in collaboration with Holy Trinity Church – in



the pouring rain! The band were also privileged to be asked to provide the music for Princess Alice Hospice's "Light up a Life Service of Remembrance" – a moving and memorable event for all involved and where the band delivered excellent musical support.

The last formal Scouting event of the year was the Carols Round the Campfire event at the Scout Centre – a lovely evening attended by many members of the Group and their families. After carol singing alongside a roaring campfire, the event moves indoors. After some much needed refreshments, the Scout Centre reverberated to the sound of the audience singing along to some fabulous Christmas tunes including "12 Days of Christmas" – always the favourite!



But that isn't the end of the Band. On the Friday and Saturday evenings before Christmas, the band play carols around the village.

This is always an enjoyable event, and it is fabulous when families come out onto the streets to sing along and enjoy the occasion. What's more, the Band raised an amazing £1,400, half of which was donated to the RSPCA and Claygate Hub and half added to the Group funds – an excellent achievement.

Looking Ahead to 2024

With the Christmas Carols returned to the cupboard for another year, the Band returned from the Christmas break in January with just a few weeks to prepare for their annual concert which is taking place on Saturday 16th March 2024 at Holy Trinity Church, Claygate. The concert is always one of the highlights of the year, and as always the Band Leader has introduced many new pieces which need to be mastered before the concert!

It promises to be another busy and exciting year for the Band!!

Why not join the band?

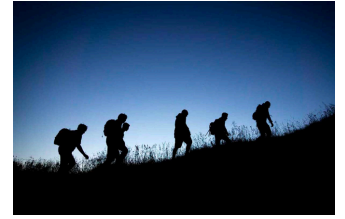
The band always extends a warm welcome to new members. You don't need to play an instrument already – we can lend instruments to you and help with tuition. Existing musicians are of course also very welcome. We select music to play that enables people of all musical abilities to take part. You're never too old to learn an instrument – and it is great fun too.

Rehearsals take place on a Friday evening at Scout HQ. Band membership is open to all involved in the Scouting and Guiding movements in Claygate.

If you are interested in joining, or just wish to find out more information, please contact Robin Wilkinson, our Band Leader, on 01372 464173 (robinwilkinson149@gmail.com).

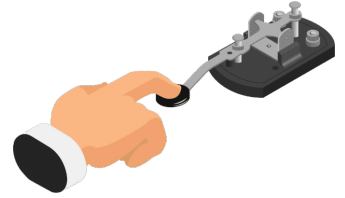


Scouts District Night Hike



The annual District Night Hike is a favourite activity in the Scouting calendar. The Scouts are transported to a location in the Surrey Hills as the sun goes down to embark on a 9 mile "incident hike". Armed with torches, maps, compasses and reflective jackets, teams set off around a course visiting several checkpoints. At some of these check points the scouts are required to do a task.

This year's route began and finished at the Scout Hut in Walton on the Hill. The Scouts followed a route which crossed the M25 a couple of times and was often in dark woodland. At checkpoints they were required to complete challenges including cooking a flatbread and sending messages in morse code. The course was quite challenging in terms of reaching the checkpoints on time but no teams went astray and all got back safely.



Going Up Ceremony & Scouts Own Sunday 4th February

Every term we celebrate the moving on by our Young People into their next sections for new adventures. We call this a Going Up Ceremony. In the Spring Term we like to hold it early on a Sunday morning so that we can also share breakfast with the Scouts who have been camping out at the Scout Centre for their Frost Camp – the smell of bacon cooking is a good way to encourage scouts out of warm sleeping bags ...

The event started with a Scouts Own – a reflection on our scouting values. This is normally led by a senior leader; but this time it was presented by Evie, an Explorer Scout who is working hard to complete her Kings Scout Award – the top award in scouting.

As part of this Evie spoke about what she has gained from her time as a Beaver, Cub, Scout and now an Explorer Scout. Choosing the scout value of Co-operation as her main theme, she reflected on how teamwork helps create friendships and makes tasks easier. *"Everyone working together makes a job more enjoyable. Things that seem impossible, can be done when everyone contributes."*

In December Evie spent five days on a Tall Ships Youth Trust course sailing between Portsmouth and Poole for the residential part of her Gold DofE award. She said that *"teamwork was fundamental to making this a success"* and that *"good communication also makes it easier and more enjoyable when everyone to pulls together."*

Following the Scouts Own, Chief Scout's Awards were presented and Mark Aulds made several Length of Service Awards to Leaders.

Before breakfast everyone went outside where, those going up into new sections, completed different challenges on a climbing frame built by the Troop.

Congratulations to the following:



Beavers – Bronze Chief Scout’s Award: Sophie, Huxley, Finn, Rowan, Sebastian & Isaac

Cubs – Silver Chief Scout’s Award: Leo, Angus, Thomas & Freya

Scouts – Gold Chief Scout’s Award: Thomas

Leaders – Chief Scout’s Length of Service Awards:

- 5 Years: Eloise Budd, Claire Hemming, & Jon Southey
- 10 years: Mark Woodward
- 15 years: Tom Ballard & Katie Ernest
- 30 years: Sally Shortman

Jonathan Perkins



HMS Belfast

Recently, the Cubs from 1st Claygate went on an exciting 'Kip on a Ship'. They slept on the famous warship for one night, with the Tower Bridge and the Houses of Parliament providing an excellent view, while doing lots of fun activities.

On the 23rd of September, the Cubs travelled up to Waterloo via the train. Then, after a short walk up to an Uber boat mooring, the group were speeding along the Thames, spying the Tower of London and Big Ben.

National Maritime Museum

The visit to the National Maritime Museum was a huge success, with the Cubs enjoying engines from ships, running around a giant map and lots more. Some of the Cubs were gaping at the huge engines. There was also a mud larker (someone who tries to find things in the mud at low tide) expedition on. One of the mud larkers had even found a Roman woggle!

HMS Belfast:

After the exiting outing, the Cubs walked a short distance back to the boat, and were soon cruising down the Thames with a huge warship coming into view.

Once on board, they were introduced to their friendly tour guide, who explained some facts, history and answered any questions about the ship. Once she had finished, she showed us to the entrance. As soon as they were inside, the group were greeted by a disabled, 10-meter torpedo! Afterwards, the guide introduced them to their bunks. The bunks were the original ones, although with different mattresses of course! The Cubs were shortly rolling their sleeping bags out and sorting out their wash kits. Later, after everything was laid out, the cubs were led to the dining room, which was actually a converted plane hold! After a delicious meal of either a classic fish and chips or a steaming mac'n cheese with lots of sweet-smelling garlic bread filling the air, and for pudding, they even delighted themselves with churros, everyone was ready to have a good nights sleep !

The tour around the ship:

On the next day, the Cubs woke up and had a superb breakfast with lots of options including hot porridge. The children were quickly sorted into groups. As the ship has about a trillion rooms (that's what it felt), all the group received a map that divided the boat into a few dozen sections. The parties split up and went to different places to discover. The gun turrets were especially popular, with the Cubs chanting '1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8 FIRE!' along with a speaker. In the steering room, there was also the chair which the captain steered the ship from. Some of them looked like proper captains! Also, there was a game which you had guide a fleet as well as you could without crashing into obstacles. Some of the Cubs got excellent results. In the engine room, everyone got to see the HUGE bits of machinery that were needed to power HMS Belfast. After a long day of climbing ladders, it was finally time to say farewell to the warship. The Cubs went back down the river to Tower Bridge train station, and then back to Claygate.

By Ben S, Lynx Pack.

Ben wrote this to complete part of the requirements of his personal challenge for his Chief Scout Silver Award. Thank you to all the leaders, young leaders and parent helpers who supported the trip. The cubs had a wonderful time. Thank you also to those who helped get all the cubs and adults from Claygate to Surbiton on Saturday morning when we arrived at the station to discover that no trains were running due to a technical issue on the tracks! And thanks to the wonderful staff at the Maritime Museum and on HMS Belfast itself.

Katie Ernest – Akela, Lynx Pack





Scouts Connecting with the Community



The Claygate Village Association is conducting a village-wide survey collecting opinions and ideas on the long term vision for Claygate to share with Elmbridge Borough Council.

One of the aims of Scouting is to encourage Scouts to make a positive contribution to society and 1st Claygate Scouts seeks to do this by getting involved in Community Initiatives like the Christmas Lights and Flower Show where it sees benefits to everyone involved.

As part of their badgework, several of the sections will be discussing their ideas for the future of Claygate during their meetings and the leaders will feedback their thoughts and ideas to the CVA. We would encourage parents and young people to complete the survey.

Use this QR code or go to <https://www.claygatevillageassociation.org/survey> to take part.

You will also see the QR code and link in The Courier and around the village. Do share the survey so the CVA can hear from as many people as possible.



Cubs County Quiz Answers:

1 Bounty, 1 Lion Bar 3 Mars Bar 4 Reeses Nut Bar 5 Double Decker 6 Topic 7 Star Bar 8 Kit-Kat Chunky 9 Yorkie 10 peppermint aero 11 Wispa Gold 12 Boost 13 Snickers 14 Milky Way 15 Fudge 16 Toffee Crisp 17 Cadbury Caramel 18 Turkish Delight 19 Picnic 20 Crunchie