

Surrey East Guiding March 2023 to March 2024

Beverly Heywood-Jones, Surrey East County Commissioner

presented by ACCs: Kate Fowles and Mary Zoeller

Thank you for inviting us to be here today and to share our year of Guiding in Surrey East. There is so much for us to be proud of and we are grateful for the dedication of our 900 volunteers who deliver guiding across Surrey East, as you have all done before us and some of you still do.

Your theme this year is a **'life of service'**, so this year I have focussed on the work of the volunteers and some of their incredible achievements.

In May, units across Surrey East celebrated the King's coronation with many completing the Region coronation challenge with red, white, and blue everywhere, and plenty of picnics and tea parties.

Guiding volunteers were given the opportunity to support this event and many applied. We were particularly excited when Mary Zoeller was awarded Coronation Champion for her service to Guiding and Di Sutherland was highly commended in the Volunteer of the Year category in the Dorking Coronation Community Spirit Awards! Roberta Wilson also applied to support the coronation and was lucky to have the opportunity to help at King Charles III's first Commonwealth Day Service at Westminster Abbey.

This was soon followed by the Big Help Out. Units across Surrey East rolled up their sleeves to volunteer in their communities and we didn't miss the opportunity to advertise for more volunteers too.

In June, over 20 brownie units went to Scram, an activity day for cubs and brownies run by Surrey Scouts. The event was such a success that this year we are holding our own similar event at Walton Firs in Cobham exclusively for Surrey East brownies – and we're calling it Brownie Revels! After a year, we finally completed the transition to the leadership development programme in September. Leaders in training can now manage their progress themselves supported by one of our 25 trained mentors. The transition itself led to a significant number of volunteers completing outstanding modules. 50 people completed module 4 to become fully qualified leaders. It has been well received and we already have 7 people who have completed the new scheme and 31 in progress.

We held a very successful leadership training day last month covering all 5 of the mandatory modules in one day.

Many volunteers supported the various campaigns to save the activity centres particularly our more local ones – Blackland and Foxlease – some took their units to events such as Wellies and Wristbands, Magic and Mayhem and Sparkle and Ice for the last time before they were closed in December. In Surrey East, we are lucky to have our own campsite and holiday house, Faurefold, which is well used throughout the year for rainbow, brownie, and guide activity days and for meetings, camps and holidays throughout the year. This year we introduced a low rope course. This is proving very popular by everyone who comes to Faurefold. We are even looking forward to welcoming a Trefoil guild very soon now that Menai has received the required training. In addition, we moved the county archives to Faurefold this year.

After 10 years of fundraising and over £280,000 raised, Epsom division achieved a significant milestone in opening their new lodge on Little Acres campsite. It comprises a large hall for sleepovers, a leaders' room, toilets and shower, kitchen and large veranda. The campsite itself offers a huge camping area with campfire, wood store, concrete bases for smaller fires, outside tap and power in a quiet private area in the picturesque and peaceful setting of Horton Country Park. We are particularly grateful to the Ewell guild for helping at Epsom's annual Summer Fun Division event, making things to sell to raise funds for Little Acres and giving regular small donations to the fundraising. Members have also signed up to be "Sewing Elves" raising money for the campsite by sewing badges onto sashes, blankets, and uniform.

Volunteer service was recognised with George Ede receiving the Region chief award and 4 leaders (Janet Coninx, Sue Sparrow, Elaine Edwards and Tracey Pettit) received good service awards. Lorna Smith, Dax Patel and Kate Fowles received the silver lion county brooch for their services to Surrey East. Over 50 volunteers received long service awards with 40-year awards to Sarah Anderson, Ronnie Stalley and Pauline Austin, 50 years to Sally Dart and Valerie Tucker and an incredible 60 years to Anne Collins. Last year one adult leader and one young member went on region trips to Europe and Epsom Rangers went to Iceland and shared amazing pictures

of them walking across the glacier. Godstone division would like to thank Warlingham Trefoil for their donation to each of the three Whyteleafe girls who took part in the European rail trips and Caterham trefoil who have worked alongside 7th Caterham (St. John) Guides at the church's Summer and Christmas fayres, and Remembrance Sunday parade. Reigate division would like to thank Horley trefoil for helping at the district thinking day event.

Going forwards you may have seen that we are all being asked for our thoughts on the uniform redesign – the first in 30 years with a goal of increasing awareness of guiding and what we do. Units are being encouraged to have their say with surveys, activity packs and focus groups to ensure everyone can contribute to the new designs for all sections that will be introduced in 2026.

As ever we are thankful for all the support we receive from trefoil members across the county. Baden-Powell once said, "the real way to gain happiness is to give it to others". 2023 brought a lot of changes but there is one consistent theme, and that is service and a determination to keep the Guiding light shining brightly.

*When you first come into guiding
You will feel a spark ignite
And from then on it's up to you
To grow your guiding light*

*If you are a happy rainbow
Your guiding light will glow
And each time you're kind and helpful
Your light will grow and grow*

*If you're a friendly brownie
Doing good turns every day
Your guiding light will brighten....
All you do, in every way*

*If you're a helpful guide
Keeping every girl guide Law*

*Your guiding light will grow much stronger
And support you more and more*

*If you reach the rangers
Looking wider every day
Your guiding light will guide you
As you journey on your way*

*If you are now a leader
Then your guiding light will be
The light you shine on others
To share the vision that you see*

*You shine it bright for rainbows,
To find their pot of gold
You shine it bright for brownies,
Adventures to unfold*

*You shine it bright for guides,
To go for it and grow
You shine it bright for
Rangers to guide them to and fro*

*You shine it bright for other leaders,
To kindle friendships old and new
And you shine it bright just for yourself
To show your guiding's true*

*Now last of all the trefoil guild,
The ones who guide forever
They shine their light for everyone
They volunteer together*

*But they no longer hold a candle
For they're just in it for the 'lark'
And they've been guiding for so long,
That they just 'glow in the dark'.*