

Luton Scout Media Manager End of Year 2020 Report

2020 has proved interesting, with a number of articles being published at the start of the year: 3 articles by Young Spokes Person (YSP) Abigail, plus an interview by Stephen and photographic support by Ethan. Despite Covid-19, and the difficulties it brought to face-to-face meetings, Scouting across Luton continued on Zoom, Facebook and other social media platforms. Limited outdoor meets gave us a 4th article by YSP Abigail. We averaged at least one article a month. All news clippings can be found on <https://www.lutonscouts.org.uk/heritage/cuttings>

Social Media and the website have proved to be successful for Scouts across Luton but to ensure success, ease of use and relevance, Stephen Avis was asked to review our media platforms. His findings are published with this report.

The methodology behind the Luton Scouts Website continues to work for anyone who wishes to join or needs to make contact, or to see the activities we undertook in the past and present. The Heritage pages keep the history of Scouting in Luton available for all with its photographs, news reports, awards and other topics. There is always room for more to be added, but I am mindful that the Heritage Photographs should include more from the 2000's.

To assist in locating information which may prove difficult to find or provoke ideas, the members area has links to many other websites within the movement and elsewhere. The Luton Scout Website will take you to the virtual training pages of HQ as well as courses in Bedfordshire, World Jamborees, past and future, camp sites home and abroad, international camp activities, current Covid updates and so much more.

Facebook is a success because it is instant, with over 750 friends from more than 40 countries; 70% live in Luton. Anyone over 14, parents, leaders can post their activities for younger members so that a Beaver, Cub, Scout, Explorer, Network, SAS, Leadership and supporters can see what they are up to. We remind groups that they are encouraged to post their activities on the Luton Facebook Page and many do. All posts are reviewed and subject to Safeguarding. When you get beyond the silly postings, Facebook has proved a revelation with Luton Scouts leading the way with meaningful activities such as the Virtual St. George's Day Week, 75th anniversary of the end of WW2, Door Step Remembrance and Virtual Camp with Northumberland Scouts, as well as the "Teapot" Challenge, good community work, charity fund raising and fun activities by groups. Many of these articles led to both written and radio interviews.

This year circumstances have prevented us attending any public shows to promote Scouting, but that will return in the future. Luton Scouts has been at the forefront by using social media to show what we do and who we are across the Town, County, UK, & around the world.

Most District activities were cancelled, and this included the Young Spokes Person Course. The course supports Young People between 14 and 25 who are keen to promote Scouting and learn about the media and build on their confidence. The idea is to put young people at the heart of Scouting's communications.

It is important that the Good Name of Scouting across Luton is placed in the public domain at every opportunity. Members of Scouting need to remember that the main audience is the General Public. It is essential to reach out to prospective new members, inform bosses and HR's that Scouts will make a positive difference to their company, and show councils and politicians the value of Scouting and the need for their support as Scouts support their local community. This does not detract from the importance of reflecting activities and support back to the membership.

The future of Scouting remains a priority in Media terms, so that we encourage people to join the movement. Even now, without face-to-face Scouting there are enquiries to join. This needs to be maintained.

It is crucial that we change to remain fresh, or there is a danger that Scouting will stagnate with the “that is how we have always done it” attitude. There are fundamental truths: remove the i-pods from young people, give them a tent, and the means to cook food, and they will have fun. This will always remain central to Scouting, but there is another truth: the young person today is very different from years gone by. There are opportunities to be better informed; the speed and style of communication is instant, and so we need to change our approach to keep up.

It is my opinion that one should lead from the front and, if there is a need to change direction, you start with the person who leads. Therefore, with effect from 1st Jan 2021, I will stand down as Media Manager and a number of other roles to enable change to happen. For me, it is an opportunity to take a rest for a number of months but remain a member of the Scout Active Support (SAS) and consider my Scouting future.

A new Media Manager, along with various additions and changes to responsibility will be soon announced, but I would wish to conclude this by thanking the media team, Mark Chamberlain, Stephen Avis, Helen Halsey, David Colclough, Helen Mann, Paul Oakley, Stuart Else, Emily Baker and Ray Aldous for their support and loyalty, making the Luton Scouts Media Team formidable.