



3rd January 2010

To all Group Scout Leaders, Executive Members, Members of District Team, Explorer Leaders

As some of you may be aware I had the District Team together for a day in December to look at where we are as a District as we enter 2010 and what action we need to be taking to take the District forward.

I am now 2 years into my current appointment as District Commissioner so as a District we need to start considering who will replace me in late 2012/early 2013 but for the moment we will need to centre our attention on immediate needs.

As a team we have set the following dates for 2010. Please put them in your diaries. For ease of identification meetings that only involve the Commissioner team I have described them as the Core Team

District Team Meetings

Joint Core Team/GSL Meeting. Tuesday 26th January, 7pm at Orton HQ
Core Team Meeting Saturday 27th February, 10am-4pm) Venue TBA
Joint Core Team/GSL Meeting. Tuesday 4th May, Venue TBA
Joint Core Team/GSL Meeting. Monday 11th October, 8pm at Stanground

The **District Executive** has set the following dates for 2010. Anyone wishing to table items for the agenda should get them to the District Secretary at least 7 days prior to the meeting so they are on the published agenda. All meetings are held in the District Training Room at Orton at 7pm.

Wednesday 20th January,
Wednesday 17th March,
Wednesday 19th May,
Wednesday 14th July,
Wednesday 17th November.

Other Dates set for 2010

Saturday 13th March Zatego – Details from Pete Lumley

Acorn Skills Training Day Saturday 12th June, Orton HQ 12th June, Orton HQ
(yes we know England play in the World Cup on the 12th)

Thursday 23rd September – District AGM St. Andrew's, Netherton

Now I want to look at other important matters with you that the District Executive needs to consider and which really ought to have major input from Group Leader's Meetings so I would ask you to call one shortly if you have not got one planned and respond in writing with your views to me with a copy to Chris Atkinson, District Secretary.

The detail is on the following pages so you can copy it to your leaders if you wish.

Happy New Year to you all

Trevor

Nene District Scout Council

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Gang Show – it's structure, organisation, costs and the future.

As you should know Gang Show has been run as a joint City activity for over 60 years and has certainly in recent years always provided surplus funds which have kept the District Membership Fee at something like 50% of what it would be without these surpluses. This has enabled us to provide leader training to all adults for free since January 1990 when the former counties merged to become Cambridgeshire.

So; why I am I asking you to consider Gang Show now? Well there are two things (at least) that require the attention of the District Executive and I don't think they can be made in isolation of the Group or Explorer Section wishes. Whatever we decide as a District may of course need further consideration as views from Medehamstede may be different from our own and in the end both Districts will need to agree the way forward jointly or of course go their separate ways.

The first change we have seen during 2009 was the loss of our own property at Shakespere Avenue as the Council declined to provide a new lease on the land. Attempts to sell the building to provide some finance for the future failed to find a buyer.

The 'temporary' solution from the Council was to provide us rent free, for a period of three years, a warehouse unit on Woodston Industrial Estate. This arrangement now has just over two years to run. If we were to pay rent from 2012 it would take all current surpluses from Gang Show meaning we would need, I believe, to add somewhere between £2 & £2.50 to the District Membership Fee to maintain our core District activities. It could be more and we need to do some sums to provide an accurate estimate.

A consideration as an alternative would be to invest money in providing an extension to the new Yaxley HQ (if the Group was willing and Huntingdonshire District Council planners agreed) to provide a more permanent new store. How much this might cost and whether the two District's could fund it from reserves are as yet uncosted so it may be a non-starter.

The second issue that we need to consider is the Show itself, Group/Unit participation and general audiences. For any one who studies the programme year on year you may be aware that for some year's the majority of the youth cast and to a great extent the adults too have been coming from Nene District membership. There is no identifiable reason for this but from a youth perspective for the years 2007-2009 over 70% of the youth cast have come from Nene District. Medehamstede do of course have another Gang Show in New Werrithorpe, but with a high Guiding cast it is not felt to be drawing youngsters away from the City Show to any extent.

Tony Packer as acting Chairman of Gang Show has however identified an even more worrying trend and that is falling ticket sales. The Show only makes a surplus by careful management of expenditure by the Director and the Standing Management Team.

The figures provided below show the trend of the last 6 years.

Year -	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Tickets sold -	2514	2379	2182	2229	2008	1850
% sold -	92.3%	89.7%	82.3%	87.5%	78.8%	74.5%

Had ticket sales for 2009 been at the same % level as 2004 we would have sold another 644 tickets and netted at least £2000.00 more surplus!

So we have to ask ourselves several questions remembering that Gang Show is an extra activity we offer in Peterborough beyond the day to day programme and that only a small number of our membership, actually take part in but has provided much needed extra funding to all Groups through reduced District Membership Fees for many years.

1. Do we want the show to continue in its current form?
2. Do we wish it to be performed in a professional theatre?

3. Can we, as a Group/Unit, work to get more parents and their children to attend to reverse declining seat sales?
4. What would we want the District Executive to do about providing costume etc storage?
5. Would we be happy to see a much higher membership fee to enable Gang Show to survive in its current form and with growing storage costs?
6. Do we have any alternative options to table to the District Executive?
7. Do we think the New Werrithorpe Show might be causing our reduced ticket sales? – ie are Nene Groups attending this in any number rather than the City Show – do we know?

I expect there are more questions we can ask ourselves, and if as a Group/Unit Leadership Team you wish to add further comments to your written response then please do so.

With the District Executive meeting on the 20th January I doubt you have time to have a leaders meeting and provide a response by then but we would appreciate your views as soon as possible and at the latest by the end of February. We would appreciate a written response from all Group's even if your response is that you have no opinion and will accept the majority decision and back it.

Thank you,

Trevor Watson
District Commissioner
03 January 2010