



## INFORMATION FOR PARENTS OF NEW SCOUTS

### WELCOME TO NEW MEMBERS OF OUR TROOP

We hope that both your son or daughter and you will have a long and enjoyable association with Aquila Scout Troop. Our aim is to provide a high standard of Scouting for all our members, so that there is plenty of fun and challenge. We have an active programme and scouts will benefit most, if they take part in as much as possible.

This Membership Pack includes various information and essential forms for new members of the Troop. Hopefully it explains most of the things that you need to know now and tell you where to ask for other information.

*Please check through all the information and fill out all the forms within two weeks of your son or daughter starting coming to Troop meetings.*

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## ABOUT AQUILA SCOUT TROOP

The next section describes what is offered to scouts in this Troop. It also gives information that will help guide you through the stages of joining the Troop. There is plenty of information on our Troop website:

<http://aquila.scout-troop.org.uk>

This website also includes descriptions of a number of Troop policies and so constitutes an important facility that parents should look at.

#### TROOP LEADERSHIP TEAM

To contact the Scout Leader, email:

[scout-leader@aquila.scout-troop.org.uk](mailto:scout-leader@aquila.scout-troop.org.uk)

#### INFORMATION FROM THE TROOP

Information about the Troop and its activities is distributed in several ways:

1. *Our website* ([aquila.scout-troop.org.uk](http://aquila.scout-troop.org.uk))
2. *By email*. This is mostly to an "email list" of all parents.
3. *Letters*. These are posted on the Newsletters page of the website as pdf files and can be downloaded for printing. Email notification is sent to parents, when new information is posted on the website. We also have paper versions of the letters available for distribution, for those who are unable to deal with the electronic versions.
4. *Announcements* at Troop meetings. Please check with your son or daughter after each meeting.

We hope that most parents will read (and print off, if necessary), the pdf versions from the website. This will help save both leader time and material. If you are not able to do this, please tick the appropriate box on the Aquila Scout Troop Information Form.

#### WEEKLY MEETINGS

Troop meetings are held weekly throughout the year, except when otherwise announced. The programme is normally a mixture of activities, preparation for camps and other expeditions, skill training and games: with fun and challenge throughout. The meetings are normally at our Group Headquarters, and are suitable for the complete Scout age range.

We are a uniformed organisation, with a training scheme in which progress is rewarded by badges worn on this uniform. See the separate section about what uniform is needed and how to get it

## OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES

An essential part of our Troop's programme is aimed at helping scouts develop interests in outdoor activities. A range of such activities is organized with both traditional camping trips and adventurous activities.



**Weekend activities.** The Troop has approximately one weekend activity a month: some last the whole weekend but others only a day. These are opportunities to put scouting into action, and to enjoy challenging adventure. The weekend trips cover a wide range of activities, such as camping at a local site, hiking, canoeing, abseiling, or maybe just a session at a local swimming pool. There are also some activities organized by the Scout District, which take the form of inter-troop competitions. Of course, most scouts will not be able to come on all these, but I hope that every scout will make the most of opportunities offered.

**Summer Camp.** This is the highlight of the Troop's year and is a week at the start of the School Summer holidays. It is hoped that all Scouts will come on the Summer Camp, which has a variety of activities. We aim to have this camp in a part of the country away from St Albans and to include adventurous activities that are not possible during the rest of the year: for example, hill walking in the Lake District and water activities.



**Safety.** Our adventure activities, such as canoeing and hill walking, are designed to be appropriate for each age range within the Troop, and new Scouts without experience in such activities will be given a strong groundwork in the basics. Adults who are experienced in leading young people supervise all these activities. The Scout Association has a strong framework of rules governing adventurous activities to ensure that both the equipment and leadership are adequate. Often the leader is required to have special qualifications from the national body governing that activity: for example from the British Canoe Union for canoeing.

## OUR TROOP AND PATROLS

An essential part of our Troop is the Patrol System. Each Patrol acts as a team for many activities, for example camping together during Troop camps. In this way, boys can learn important skills together, using the experience of other scouts in their patrol, and scouts get experience at leading others. Each Patrol has a Patrol Leader and Assistant Patrol Leader, who are likely to be experienced, older scouts.

New scouts are placed temporarily in a patrol when they first start coming to meetings, although the patrol is not finalized until investiture into the Troop (see below). While every effort is made to take into account the wishes of new member, it is important for us to ensure that patrols are balanced in terms of numbers and ages.



## BADGES AND AWARDS

There are two main sorts of awards: challenge badges and activity badges. The badges provide an incentive for Scouts to learn and develop skills. They also give a measure of the ability of Scouts in particular skills and allow them to develop at their own pace, the abilities needed to participate fully in the Troop activities.

Please occasionally talk with your Scout about progress through these badges. We recommend that Scouts get the Scout Handbook from the Scout Shop, containing information about all the badges.

**Challenge Badges.** These are a series of badges such as Outdoor Challenge and Adventure Challenge. The badges are awarded on completion of a skills and/or activities, from first aid, through pioneering and camping skills, to options for older scouts such as canoeing, rock climbing and backpacking.



Outdoor Challenge badge

**Chief Scout's Gold Award.** On completion of several Challenges a Scout can get the highest award for Scouts, the Chief Scout's Gold Award. This Chief Scout's Award is aimed at the oldest scouts and to complete this Award a scout must show personal initiative to organize and complete a series of activities, including adventurous expeditions and community service. The Scout must also show that he or she can provide active leadership within the Troop.

**Activity badges.** There are a wide variety of activity badges, each covering a particular topic. Some are about topics already in the main scouting program, but take the subjects further: for example camping, hiking, first aid. Some cover pursuits such as boating activities, and provide a good basis for Scouts to learn about or extend their interest in that pursuit.



Hiker Activity Badge

Some badges cover various interests or hobbies that scouts may already pursue: examples are computers, swimming, collecting.

**Year Badge, Nights Away Badge, Hikes Badge.** These are badges for the total length of time in Scouting and the total number of nights at Camps, etc. There are series of these badges to recognise this participation. The Years and Nights Away recognition includes that as a Cub or as member of another Group: so please provide that information in the Aquila Troop Information Form.

On the whole, the training and activities necessary to pass the awards in the progressive training scheme are covered during

Troop meetings, camps etc.: normally, parents may not 'test' their own child on skills in this scheme. However, we are always looking for people, including parents, to help instruct and examine Activity Badges. The way to do this is described in the section on Parents' Help.

### **PERSONAL EQUIPMENT**

For each camp or other activity, you will be sent a list of equipment, clothes etc. that will be needed. Normally there is a fair degree of substitute items that are possible, as new scouts may not have the exact items specified. However, scouts tend to acquire the camping and hiking equipment, as they get older. Two items that most scouts soon get are hiking boots, for use on both camps and hikes, and a framed backpack, initially to use for personal kit at camps. There is a section of the Troop website with guidance on getting activity equipment. Please contact the scout leader, if you want more advice.

### **OUR SCOUT GROUP**

Our Group has a purpose-built headquarters in Hall Heath Close, off Sandpit Lane in St Albans. Our Headquarters backs onto the Wick, a public area of woodland and field that is ideal for outdoor activities.

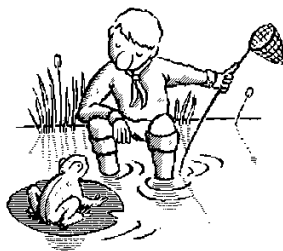
The Scout Group is the main organisational unit of Scouting and provides facilities and support for all its young members from 6 to 14 years of age. Our Scout Troop has boys and girls from 10 and a half to 14. Explorer Scout Units for young people up to 18 years old are currently District-based.

The main decision-making body of the Group is the Group Executive Committee, made up of Section Leaders and some parents. This Committee is responsible for finance, for the headquarters building and equipment and for providing support for the Scouting sections.

The Group is sponsored by the Homewood Road United Reformed Church, who provide considerable support for the Group. There is no requirement to be a member of that church, but the Group has three Church Parades a year on Sunday mornings and all Group members are expected to attend some of these.

### **GROUP HEADQUARTERS AND PARKING**

There is very limited parking in the Group Headquarters' grounds. While picking up scouts after meetings etc., please try to avoid blocking our neighbours' drives. Normally, parents' parking for open evenings and other special events is just round the corner at the Homewood Road Church or in Beaumont Avenue.



Note that Scouts should wait in the Group Headquarters at the end of meetings until collected by parents. The Group cannot accept responsibility for scouts going to or from the Headquarters. Furthermore, it ensures that behaviour and noise within Hall Heath Close are kept at reasonable levels.

### **SUBSCRIPTIONS AND ACTIVITY FEES**

**Subscriptions.** These are collected three times a year, at the start of each School Term. Parents should get a separate request for this. They cover the basic cost of Troop expenses, such as the purchase of badges, small items of equipment and books, maps etc. They also contribute to the cost of Group camping equipment, upkeep of our headquarters, insurance and capitation fees. Capitation fees are what the Group pays each

year for each member towards the cost of running the national Scout Association, the St Albans Scout District etc.

**Activity fees.** Generally, Scouts attending trips, camps and other Nights Away Activities pay the cost of them in an activity fee.

**Ways to pay.** Troop policies about such payments is given in the Troop web site. The preferred method for activity fees is by direct, internet transfer. See the Scout Leader to get our account details.

**Gift Aid.** We hope that all parents will return a completed Gift aid Form:

[http://aquila.scout-troop.org.uk/Joining/new\\_scouts.htm](http://aquila.scout-troop.org.uk/Joining/new_scouts.htm)

so we can claim back from the taxman (NOT from you) a tax refund, based on the subscriptions you pay. This is an important extra income for the Group



### **TROOP POLICIES AND SCOUT BEHAVIOUR**

Policies on a number of areas are on our website: Home>Other information>Troop policies. Please read these sections as part of this Pack. It includes what we expect in terms of participation, involvement and behaviour for us to continue as a successful troop.

This Troop hopes to provide a wide range of exciting activities and but all depend on the participation of volunteer leaders. The Scout Law provides a Code of Behaviour for Scout activities and is printed in this Pack: this Law is another thing that makes Scouting unique.

We therefore expect that young people participating in this Troop exercise self-discipline and quickly learn when is the time for seriousness and when a more relaxed behaviour is appropriate. Poor behaviour is detrimental to every other Scout in the Troop.

A Scout (not parents) will be warned, if behaviour is below standard and therefore jeopardizing a scout's membership in the Troop. A Scout that persistently does not cooperate in this matter will, after suitable warning, be sent home - whether from the Group Headquarters or from a trip away from St Albans.



## **JOINING OUR TROOP**

By the time you get this Membership Pack, your son or daughter may be well on the way to becoming a full member of the Troop. Young people who join when well past 10 years old, or transferring from another Troop, are equally welcome but the procedure may be a little different, depending on the exact circumstances.

The normal course of joining is described below and is followed by a list of things that must be completed before we can invest a new scout, which is the formal joining ceremony.

### ***Steps in joining***

1. Cubs in the 18th Group probably already know some of the scouts and leaders of our Scout Troop well before they are old enough to go up to the Troop. The Scout Leader will have talked to each cub about the Troop.
2. When cubs are close to 10 1/2 years old, they will start coming to Troop meetings to do their "Moving on Award". Cubs initially wear cub uniform, including Group neckerchief. Boys or girls joining from outside Scouting start coming at this age also and can wear casual clothes. New Scouts come to a few meetings before making a final decision to join
3. A short investiture ceremony during a Troop meeting, when the new scout makes the Scout Promise, marks the formal entry into the Troop.



***Things that need doing.*** Before we can invest new scouts, there are a few things that need to be completed, some by the Scout, some by the parents. These are summarised here, but we will write, closer to the time, to sort out details.

1. **Membership forms:** There are two forms that must be signed and returned. This form is sent as part of this Membership Pack.
2. **Subs:** These must be paid to the Scout Leader for the current term.
3. **Scout uniform:** the uniform shirt purchased (and uniform trousers, if not previously a Cub), as described in the Membership Pack. Note that this Troop requires full uniform, shirt and trousers and that Scouts coming up from Cubs **MUST** wear their Group neckerchief.
4. **Participation as a Scout:**
  - a. The Scout Leader will talk with potential new Scouts about Scouting in general.
  - b. We go through the Scout Promise to be made during the Investiture, and the Scout Law, which is our Code of Behaviour. These are printed elsewhere in this pack. Scouts should be familiar with and know both of these. Before investing new Scouts, we will check this is so.
  - c. New Scouts must take part in three Troop meetings



## **SCOUT PROMISE AND LAW**

### ***SCOUT PROMISE***

(...used by Scouts, Explorers, Leaders)

On my honour,  
I promise that I will do my best,  
To do my duty to God  
and to the Queen,  
To help other people  
And to keep the Scout Law

Please note that other forms of the Promise are available for various faiths. See the Troop Leaders for details.

### ***SCOUT LAW***

1. A Scout is to be trusted
2. A Scout is loyal
3. A Scout is friendly and considerate
4. A Scout belongs to the worldwide family of Scouts
5. A Scout has courage in all difficulties
6. A Scout makes good use of time and is careful of possessions and property
7. A Scout has self-respect and respect for others

## PARENTS' HELP

We want to offer high quality Scouting in the Aquila Troop. To achieve this, suitable equipment, a well-maintained headquarters and robust financial support are all essential. In addition we need sufficient adults for meetings and activities.

The success of the Scout Troop depends on the involvement of many parents as well as leaders. All leaders are volunteers and there is no financial support from outside the Group, so what we achieve depends on all of us... AND YOU. We need parents to contribute at least 6 hours per year to help us in some way: many currently contribute a great deal more time.

There are various ways to help, outlined below, but in any case we hope that all parents will do the following any way:

1. Pay subscriptions on time, as described in "*Subscriptions and activity fees*"
2. The Group has a Good Neighbour Policy – please note the parking difficulties in Hall Heath Close, given in "*Group headquarters and parking*"
3. Parents need to keep informed through reading emails, letters and our website, and coming to the Troop and Group Parents' Meetings.

### HELP THE TROOP

The ways to help us are outlined in the next column. Contact the Scout Leader

#### HELP THE GROUP

The ways to do this are given in the "*Group membership form*". We need people who will help with:

- Joining the Group Executive (and so represent the Troop)
- Administration and finance
- Fundraising
- Maintaining equipment
- Maintaining our Headquarters



### DBS

Because of these ways to help, we hope that all families have at least one parent complete the DBS clearance. This checking procedure is required for all adults that have unsupervised contact with our young members. This enables us to use parents' help effectively.

If you have already completed a form through the Scout Association, then please show the certificate to the Scout Leader. Unfortunately DBS clearances for other organisations are not valid in the Scout Association.

You will be contacted later about this.



## WAYS PARENTS CAN HELP THE TROOP

### Parents rota

**Need:** We have a rota of parents to help at Troop meetings, and setting up and dismantling camps. We hope all parents will take part in this.

**Commitment:** A most, once a term, 6 hours a year.

**Other info:** You will be contacted about taking part.

### Leader / Assistant Leader

**Need:** Part of team to run the Troop

**Commitment:** Most weekly meetings and some planning time.

**Other info:** Occasional weekend activities

### Troop Helper

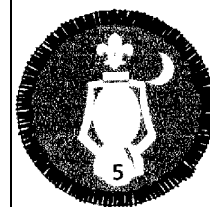
**Need:** Help team running the Troop

**Commitment:** Most weekly meetings

**Other info:** Hope you may help with some planning and/or activities



### Help at Camps



**Need:** Help leadership team at the Camp: we generally need one or two parents at each camp.

**Commitment:** Once or twice a year

**Other info:** Lots of fun and what an experience. Could be more in the background, eg sorting out the food for patrols to cook

### Specific Activities - badges

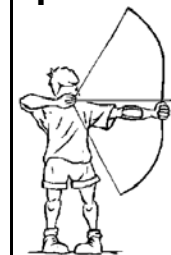
**Need:** Support for specialist activity badges, such as Information Technology, Music, Sports, Outdoor Pursuits

**Commitment:** 6 hours per year, times by arrangement

**Other info:** Usually small group of scouts. Badge requirements available from Leaders or online at Scoutbase (linked via Troop website).



### Specific Activities – specialist skills



**Need:** Expertise in specific activities such as climbing, water activities, archery, swimming

**Commitment:** About 6 hours a year

**Other info:** Supervise scouts for such an activity. Possibly you will need a current qualification from the sport national body.

### Find us someone else to help

Talk with friends, neighbours etc., who might be willing to help in one of these ways.

### Contact the Scout Leader

If you can help



# SCOUT UNIFORM

Scouting is a uniformed organisation and the uniform is one of the things that make being a Beaver, Cub or Scout special. Our uniform is worn for most weekly meetings and to and from camps and similar activities (unless otherwise informed).

## WHAT IS THE UNIFORM?

All members of the Group wear the same type of uniform trousers, which are blue cargo trousers. Each section has its own top: Scouts wear a green shirt.



New scouts need to buy the uniform top and trousers on joining, but all badges and the woggle (and also a neckerchief, if joining from outside the Group) are presented to new scouts when they are invested (see below). When transferring to a new section only a scout shirt should be needed. Uniforms and other scout items can be bought at the District Scout Shop: see below.

Everyone in the Group wears the Group neckerchief, which has blue and gold halves. We all also wear some of the same badges: the Group nametape, St Albans and Herts badges and the World Scout Membership badge. Scouts also have a badge indicating their Patrol

The badges are presented when the new scout is invested.



**World Membership Badge**

In addition our Group can wear the FURY badge (Fellowship of United Reformed Youth), presented when a member has attended two church parades at our sponsoring church.

## POSITION OF BADGES

The following pictures show where to put badges on uniform tops. Badges are dealt with as follows. Other badges are presented when gained.

*Presented to new Scouts* when they join the Group (at the Investiture):

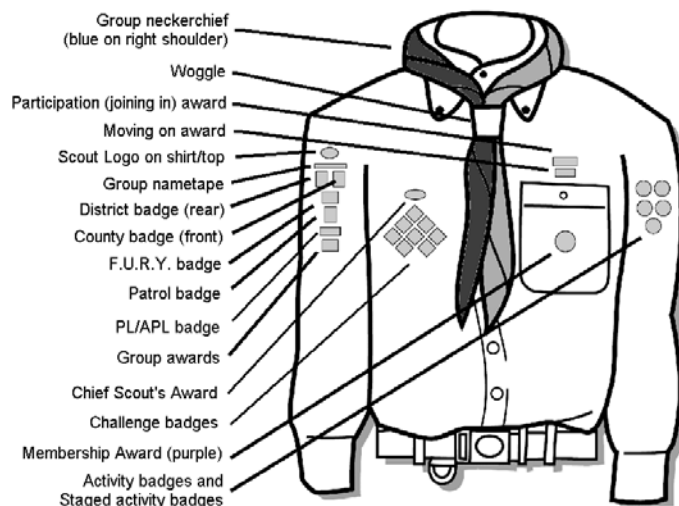
Neckerchief

*Presented to new Scouts, moving on from Cubs:*

Scout woggle  
New Group nametape,  
St Albans, Herts and Membership badge  
Patrol badge

*If gained before becoming a Scout* These badges can be transferred to the new Scout shirt:

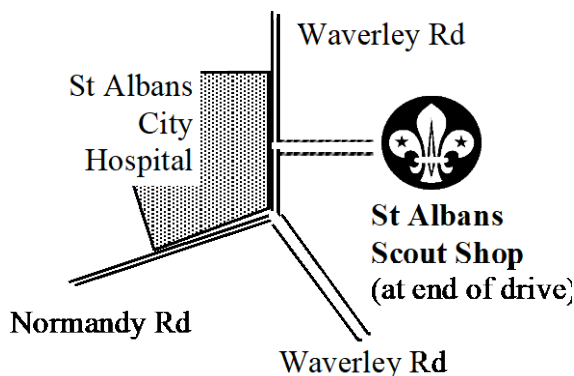
FURY badge  
Group awards  
Staged activity awards  
Year badges  
Chief Scout's Award



## WHERE TO BUY UNIFORM

Uniform and other scouting items can be bought at the District Scout Shop. This is open twice a week during term time. Search on-line for 'St Albans Scout Shop' to get current times. The shop is located at the Scout District Headquarters off Waverley Road. It is signposted from this road and parking is available. If you are unable to get to the District Scout Shop at these times, please contact your section leader.

The UK Scout Association sells uniforms on line (linked via the Troop website). Uniforms can also be bought at Stevenson's in Victoria Street.



## WHAT DO YOU NEED TO BUY?

*When joining the Group:* Uniform trousers and shirt

*On moving up from Cubs:* Scout shirt

Note: Uniform shorts are available as an option, as are polo shirts. These are suitable for activities in the Summer. There is an optional skirt instead of trousers for girls, but this may not be suitable for all activities.

## USED UNIFORMS

If you have uniform items that are no longer needed, why not donate them to the Troop, so that we can pass them on.

## FOOTWEAR

Trainers are the normal footwear for weekly meetings. Boots are not suitable for meetings in the Group Headquarters, because hard soles may cause injury during active games.

# NOTES ABOUT THE FORMS

## MEMBERSHIP FORMS

The return of the Membership Form is required to register a new Scout in the Troop. **PLEASE RETURN THE FORM ELECTRONICALLY OR PAPER TO THE SCOUT LEADER WITHIN TWO WEEKS OF STARTING.**

If you have any question about the forms that is not answered on these pages, please contact the Scout Leader.

The following are notes that explain various questions and permissions and should be read in conjunction with the two forms.

## MEMBERSHIP RECORDS

The Scout Movement in the United Kingdom is a membership organisation. To enable it to operate and to communicate with its members it is necessary to maintain records about them on paper and computer. This includes keeping details of name, address and contact details (as on the attached form). We will also keep details of each Scout's progress through badges gained etc.

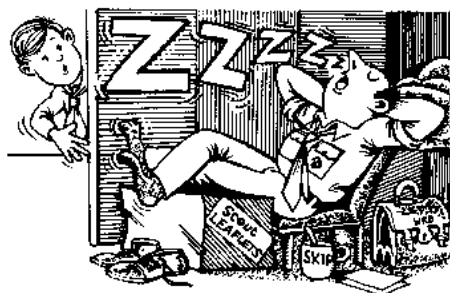


The law classes certain information as 'Sensitive Personal Data'. In a Scouting context, this includes information about health (to ensure that we are prepared for medical emergencies etc.) and religion (to ensure that we can make appropriate arrangements when necessary). To hold this 'Sensitive Personal Data' we need a parent's/guardian's explicit consent. This is given by completing, signing and returning the enclosed forms.

The information will be used only in connection with the Scout Troop and Group, including membership management and communications. Information held by our Scout Troop and Group may be shared from time to time within Scouting such as with the Headquarters of the Scout Association (for example for insurance purposes). None of the information provided will be passed to any third parties outside the Scout Association without your specific consent, which is not requested at this time.

**Email addresses.** Children's email addresses will not be passed outside the Troop leadership team.

**Updates.** Please inform the Scout Leader, if any of the information changes.



## RECORD OF PREVIOUS SCOUTING

We need to obtain a record of Nights Away and time in scouting before joining Aquila, so we can ensure that the correct badges are awarded, as described on Badges and Awards. Please help

us complete our records for your son's or daughter's Scouting BEFORE joining the Troop (e.g. as Beaver and Cub). This includes participation in other Scout Groups as well. While we want to be as accurate as possible, we do not want lack of precise records to prevent your son getting full recognition for this participation. We realise memories may be incomplete: do your best!

The participation, recorded on the form, will be added to that as a Scout in this Troop. We will then award the appropriate badges.

## TROOP PHOTOS

We try to produce a photographic record of Troop activities. This mainly include the camps and other Nights Away but with some special Friday evening activities. The photos are of the type also shown at various parents' evenings.

We need to have parents' permission to take and include photos of their children in such presentations, even though we only distribute them to parents and leaders. Conversely, we ask you to confirm that, if you or your scout have photos of scout activities, you will not copy, modify, distribute or post on a web site any of the content. In this way, we not only protect the work of the photographers (who are leaders, parents and possibly Scouts), but also, I hope, give confidence that this is an appropriate use of these photos. Note that these type of presentations have limited scope for close-up photos of any particular Scout and individual, high-resolution photos cannot be extracted.

## PARENTS HELP

Please complete the section on the Group Membership Form about what you can do to contribute to the successful scouting we can offer. The types of help are more fully described in the section on "Parents' Help" above. Without parents getting involved, the leaders cannot concentrate on delivering a full and active programme, nor would we have the facilities and equipment needed.

## GIFT AID

The importance of this is described in the section on **SUBSCRIPTIONS AND ACTIVITY FEES**. Please complete and return the Gift aid form along with the others, unless you have already completed a form for the Group.

