

1st Rathfriland Scout Group Report 2023-2024

Squirrels

We started the year with 5 Squirrels, and 1 more joined in December, so we have 6. We have 3 leaders who work really hard all year. Thank you to Sharon, Lisa, and Amy!

Last year, we took 6 Squirrels to the Squirrel Day at Todd's Leap. They all had a lovely day, and the feedback from the leaders was that it was a very well-organised event. Thank you to Tracey and the team for organising it.

This year, we worked hard on our badges. We completed the following badges:

- All About Adventure
- All About Me
- All Around Us
- Chief Scout's Acorn
- Be Active
- Feel Good
- Get Creative
- Let's Celebrate
- Local Superhero

Additionally, 3 Squirrels earned their Chief Scout Acorn badge. We also have 4 Squirrels moving on to Beavers in September. In November, we visited Rathfriland Fire Station, and I'd like to extend our thanks to our Squirrel parent and fireman Daryl for organising that. In December, we had a trip to the cinema with the Beavers.

Every night before they go home, we share stories, and at the start of the night, everyone sits in a circle and tells us about the good turns they've done in the past week.

We've played games like duck duck goose, egg and spoon runs, and participated in an assault course and dodgeball.

Our Squirrels also attended a multicultural festival in Newry, where they were part of an African Drumming circle, tasted various curries, learned Ulster Scots, and participated in a colour run.

On June 22nd, we're having a fun day for the kids with bouncy castles and campfires to cook sausages on. We'll also be hosting a badge ceremony for the kids and their parents during our AGM.

Squirrels Team Leader: Robert

Beavers

Cinema Magic: Back in December, we joined our Squirrels for the Annual Cinema Night. Kudos to Adrian for orchestrating this delightful event. Picture cosy seats, flickering screens, and shared laughter—it was a memory etched in time.

Badge Quest: Throughout the year, our Beavers earned an impressive array of badges. From **teamwork** to **world challenges**, they tackled each one with determination. And the **Communicator** badge? Well, let's just say parents got a surprise call during a session—oops!

Fire Station Discovery: November led us to the Rathfriland Fire Station. A big shout-out to Daryl, our Squirrel parent and firefighter extraordinaire, for making it happen. Our Beavers got to feel the weight of the Jaws of Life, feel what it's like to sit in the Fire Engine and got excited when the Leaders had a race on who could get the gear on the quickest – well done to Amy and Lisa! Definitely a competitive streak.

Game Nights: Our game repertoire expanded this year. Imagine lasers slicing through the air as Beavers strategised to nab “bank” loot. And when it came to Duck Duck Goose, we taught them how to play it the right way!

Supermums Assemble: for Mother's Day, our Beavers crafted Supermums—miniature superheroes with capes and heartwarming smiles. These pint-sized champions flew home, ready to save the day (and maybe fold laundry).

Global Adventures: March took us to a multicultural festival in Newry. Our Beavers drummed to African beats, sampled exotic curries, and even picked up a bit of Ulster Scots. And during the colour run, they painted the town in vibrant hues.

Beaver Team Leader
Louise

Cubs

Rathfriland Cubs have enjoyed a busy and productive year with record numbers of attendance. With a larger group, we have focused on building good discipline and organisational skills and encouraged every member to play their role in making sure things run smoothly. To this end, we have had many discussions and activities exploring inclusivity and diversity and how we can create a community of equals.

The cubs chose to learn about food poverty and over several months we collected food and supplies for the local foodbank, welcoming the manager to discuss the work they do in Rathfriland. This was very rewarding and enabled the pack to have a positive impact on our community as well as raising awareness of these issues.

One of the most popular activities this year was undoubtedly when one of our older cubs led a series of circus workshops for the pack, demonstrating various circus skills. This was a very valuable leadership experience for our resident circus master and a lot of fun for the pack. It was great to see how supportive the pack were in encouraging this member to step out of his comfort zone and into a leading role. We were proud to award him a little trophy in recognition of his hard work.

Most of our members have earned their **teamwork** and **team leader** badges through a series of team challenges incorporating many different skills so that every child has an opportunity to shine. We have seen great personal development as a result, with confidence increasing as the year went on. The **Athletics** badge was also very popular, and we have especially enjoyed getting active outside.

We have enjoyed celebrating world festivals and learning about different cultures, trying out new food, games, and languages. We also celebrated what makes us all different, with many of our members bringing in collections or sporting equipment to demonstrate their hobbies and interests.

From exploring space to mastering obstacle courses, from Chinese calligraphy to making music, it has been a packed year for Rathfriland cubs. We have awarded more badges than ever before.

Cubs attended a multicultural festival in Newry which included being part of an African Drumming circle, tasting various curries, learning Ulster Scots and Calleigh dancing and taking part in a colour run.

Artist, Collector, Entertainer, Hobbies, Martial Arts, Physical Recreation and Sports Enthusiast badges will be awarded this year also at our fun day.

My thanks go to GSL Louise who is a constant support and source of knowledge, leader Jon who continues to bring his musicality and sense of fun to the group, and Amy, our parent helper who provides endless patience and practical help.

Yours in Scouting,

Arlene

Scouts

This year 1st Rathfriland Scouts ran a varied programme with a mix of fun activities and badge work. We currently have 15 members.

Last August our Scouts had a joint Backwoods Cooking camp in Castlewellan Forest Park with 1st Poyntzpass Cubs and Scouts with 9 Scouts achieving **Nights Away** badges.

One of our Scouts managed to achieve a variety of badges this year – **Personal, Teamwork, Artist, Equestrian and Farming**. One other Scout achieved their **Model Maker** badge.

We attended the Remembrance Day parade and lay a wreath in November.

The **Global Issues Badge** was completed by learning about Malaria and playing 'Mosquito Malaria' and 'Health Bingo'. They explored the rights and disparities between different countries illustrated through luxuries available to some counties that are not available to others. Two teams were tasked to sort through a bag of clothes to find as many different countries of manufacture as they could and mark these on a map. They were able to see a pattern of production in Asia and discussed the pros and cons of fast fashion. To finish this badge, the Scouts quantified their weekly water usage, and this was contrasted with that in another country prone to drought. They learnt about what measures are taken in Australia to conserve and collect water.

As part of the **Skills Challenge Award**, the group received a talk from PSNI about the effects of drugs, alcohol, and smoking. The following week this was reflected on, and the scouts are designing a cloud diagram to display in the hall to help educate others about the dangers of drugs. This started their **Community Impact Badge**.

The Scouts were sent home with a list of home skills to complete as part of the Skills Challenge Award.

Several team building activities were completed including 'Can Span' which went towards **team building and teamwork**. Other teamwork activities comprised of 'Human Knot Game',

'Noodle Pass Game', 'Hula Hoop Pass', balloon race, balloon balance and learning the old parlour game of 'Consequences'.

The **Chef Badge** was finished off by taking part in 'Fantasy Diners' where they had to create a menu for diners with various allergens and cultural dietary requirements. A quiz about keeping food safe in the fridge, transport of food and where to buy food covered the remainder of this badge.

The group learned about map reading and finding features using coordinates. They practiced hitch knots on a bunch of sticks and completed a **hike in Mourne Park** with 1st Poyntzpass Scout Group.

Scouts attended a multicultural festival in Newry in March which included being part of an African Drumming circle, tasting various curries, learning Ulster Scots and Calleigh dancing and taking part in a colour run.

A mental health awareness information session was delivered by Action Mental Health.

At Christmas the Scouts made and decorated Christmas shortbread. At Easter they made Crème Egg stuffed croissants and used their senses to guess objects hidden in plastic easter eggs.

A team of 6 Scouts are venturing to Derry/ Londonderry this Saturday to join in the fun of the Monopoly Run.

In August we hope to have our annual joint camp with 1st Poyntzpass with the venue being Crawfordsburn this year.

Scouts Team Leader

Kate

Group Lead Volunteer

Louise

I want to express my heartfelt gratitude to the following dedicated individuals who have contributed immensely to our scout group this year: Robert, Sharon, Lisa, Amy (Squirrel & Beaver Team), Bindi-Lee (Young Leader), Arlene, Jon, Amy (Cub Team), Kate, Darren, and Robert (Scout Team). Their hard work and commitment have made it possible for us to offer the gift of Scouting to our young members.

Together, you've created a supportive, nurturing environment where our young Scouts can learn, grow, and thrive. Your impact extends far beyond Scouting; it shapes the future leaders of tomorrow.

As we look ahead to another exciting year, let's continue to build on our successes, learn from challenges, and keep the Scouting spirit alive. Thank you for being an essential part of our Scout family.

With heartfelt appreciation,

Louise

Group Lead Volunteer

Section	Number of young people 2022-2023	Number of young people 2023-2024	Increase/ decrease
Squirrels	5	5	0%
Beavers	11	7	-36.36%
Cubs	18	20	11.11%
Scouts	15	15	0%

Squirrel Badges Awarded

Badge	Quantity
Chief Scout's Acorn	3
All About Adventure	5
All About Me	4
All Around Us	3
All Together	1
Be Active	5
Brilliant Builder	1
Feel Good	5
Get Creative	5
Let's Celebrate	5
Local Superhero	3
Joining In Level 1	2
Total Badges	45

Beavers Badges Awarded

Badge	Quantity
Teamwork Challenge	3
World Challenge	5
Builder	7
Communicator	6
Cook	5
Creative	6
Disability Awareness	5
Safety	7
Joining In Level 1	2
Total Badges	46

Cubs Badges Awarded

Badge	Quantity
Team Lead Challenge	15
Teamwork Challenge	15
Artist	5
Athletics	17
Collector	4
Entertainer	14
Hobbies	5

Martial Arts	1
Physical Recreation	4
Sports Enthusiast	4
Joining In Level 1	3
Joining In Level 2	2
Total Badges	89

Scouts Badges Awarded

Badge	Quantity
Personal	1
Skills	3
Teamwork	3
Artist	1
Chef	7
Equestrian	1
Farming	1
Global Issues	5
Model Maker	1
Physical Recreation	3
Hikes Level 2	2
Nights Away Level 1	2
Nights Away Level 2	3
Nights Away Level 4	2
Nights Away Level 5	2
Joining In Level 4	8
Joining In Level 5	1
Joining In Level 7	5
Total Badges	51