



Having recently re-opened the Scout Headquarters following the government's relaxation of COVID regulations and after standing empty for 18 months, it is with great regret we have to announce that our Scout Headquarters in Westmead Lane, Chippenham has been broken into repeatedly and significantly vandalised over a series of nights between 6th and 12th October 2021.

Much of our camping, kitchen and specialist equipment has been damaged or destroyed, equipment has been removed from the hut, and the young people's craft supplies, games, toys etc have been emptied out onto the floor and destroyed. The main hall and kitchen of the building has been graffitied, the kitchen cupboard doors pulled off or spray painted, interior glass smashed, cupboards emptied onto the floor, fire extinguishers deployed, locks ripped from internal doors and the entire building has been left in a dreadful state.

This has really upset our Scouts, Cubs, Beavers, Leaders, and the parents of our Young People as well as our supporters in the community. We have seen many tears from the young Cubs who unfortunately witnessed the state of their HQ as we opened the doors on Monday Night for our regular Pack meeting. This resulted in the meeting being cancelled with 36 very disappointed Cubs being sent home. We have also seen the tears of our leaders, the despair, disbelief, and anger with those within our community who wish to damage a community facility, it has been an extremely upsetting time for everyone involved with 10th Chippenham Scout Group. After 44 years this is, without doubt, the most destructive episode of criminal damage that we have ever seen in the history of the Group.

As Leaders we freely give our time to support the young people in our community, providing them with many opportunities that would normally not be available to them, helping them gain Skills for Life. Our Scouting ethos is that we provide a fully inclusive environment for any young person or adult who wishes to join the Scout Group, of which our Headquarters is central to our existence providing shelter in the foulest of weather and providing storage area for outdoor equipment. Currently we have in excess of 100 young people aged 6-14 years and supporting adults who are members of the Group.

Getting "back to normal" has been a priority for the Scout Group which has now been set back by many weeks. However, we would like to thank our supporters in the Community who are rallying around at this moment to help and Wiltshire Police for their ongoing support with investigating the incidents.

Despite the setbacks the Scout Group will continue to function during this time, and we look forward to being able to welcome our Scouts, Cubs and Beavers back into the safe environment that our Scout Headquarters should be.

If you could help us in anyway, please do contact me. Thank You

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