



Get Involved? Information Pack

Welcome

Hey, thanks for taking the time to read the information below. Everyone has the skills and experience to make a difference for young people in Loose Swiss and the Scouting community. Loose Swiss may be a group with a lot of traditions, but we are also modern and diverse, always striving to develop and bring new experiences to the young people of Loose.

No one ever said it was easy running or bringing a group together, but it also can't be done by one person. Our main aim is to create an environment where the young people want to come and the leaders or helpers want to be here, so that young people can experience life-changing skills and experiences that will hopefully accelerate them to the future.

Having been involved with Scouting for over 30 years, I can tell you it's one of the most rewarding experiences you can have. While it does require giving up some of your time, the joy and fulfilment you'll see in young people as they succeed in life make it all worthwhile. I wouldn't be where I am today without the incredible support and guidance from those who helped me along the way. The Loose Swiss Scout group thrives because of dedicated leaders and helpers. Join us in making a difference—you'll be amazed at the positive impact you can have!

At Loose Swiss, we are incredibly proud to have our own HQ and the beautiful Swiss Valley. A group like ours thrives thanks to the diverse individuals who support and run it. Don't worry—there's always a role that fits you perfectly. Volunteering is a fantastic opportunity to have fun, learn new skills, and grow personally. We're all here to help you take on new challenges and enjoy the journey!

Below, you'll find more information that will hopefully provide you with additional insights into Scouting and Loose Swiss. Some of it might be familiar to you, while other parts may answer any questions you have.

Steve Harley - *Group Scout leader*





What is Scouts Association?

The UK Scout Association provides adventure and Skills for Life to hundreds of thousands of young people every week across the UK. Scouting exists to actively engage and support young people in their personal development, empowering them to make a positive contribution to society.

Who are Loose Swiss?

We provide exciting and engaging experiences to young people aged 6 to 14 from Loose and the surrounding area. We offer a wide range of scouting activities, such as camping, hiking, orienteering, first aid, badge word to name a few.

The Group was first formed in 1908 and has been in continual operation ever since. Recently the group has enjoyed great success, due to the hard work and dedication of the section leaders and group exec. We are a very popular scout group with two Beaver colonies, two Cub packs and a Scout troop. These activities allow us to equip young people with a great set of life skills that they can use well into adulthood.

All of our sections are very active and partake in frequent meetings, camps, trips and experiences. We are fortunate to have a large area of land owned by the group which is used for activities all year-round.

Our Headquarters is based in Pickering Street in the middle of Loose.





Why Swiss? There is a certain amount of speculation in view of the original name of the troop as 11th Central Kent. It would appear that one of the original patrols was called Swiss Troop as early as 1913. It is also known that Jack Barcham Green had many business connections with Switzerland due to his paper manufacturing business. He married a Swiss lady and his house was called Swiss Cottage. Also the troop visited Switzerland on a number of occasions and the name therefore appears to have stuck.

History

In 1908 Jack Barcham Green (the founder of Loose Swiss) was first approached in 1908 by a group of boys to start up the new game of "scouting", the current organisation of scouting did not exist in any recognisable form. Groups of boys (known as patrols) met in small shelters and sheds with little or no organisation or rules. As scouting became more organised, warrants for leaders were introduced. Jack Barcham Green's first warrant was dated 1910 and was signed by Baden Powell.

During the first World War there are stories of the scouts helping in the war effort and being part of the coastal watch in Birchington. It was during this period that the Cub sections were started for the younger boys from 8 years upwards.

By 1950 the group was growing from strength to strength with new leaders taking on more roles within the group. Scouting was now a well established world wide organisation which in 1957 celebrated its 50 years with a large World Jamboree at Sutton Coalfield.

In 1958 the group celebrated its 50th anniversary with a camp and a service of dedication.

The expansion of the housing in the area in the 1960's fed through to an increase in the number of boys looking to join the scouts. An upsurge in the number of boys and the associated support meant that further expansion of the HQ took place in 1976 with the erection of the two storey building.

The opportunity arose in 1981 to purchase 44 acres of the valley to the east of Salts pond through to Bottlescrew hill. The area contained 4 ponds, woodland, grazing land and a quarry, all to be used as a camp site and activity area. The site was dedicated in May 1982 and became known as Swiss Valley.

Over the years Scouting has changed, but we were fortunate enough to still be able to celebrate our centenary in 2008 and also our 110 in 2018. The traditions and the legacy of





many of the leaders involved in Loose Swiss still remain today, but more modern challenges and experiences are always right around the corner.

Sections

BEAVERS

Beavers is open to girls and boys ages 6 - 8 years old.

We have 2 sections Willows that meet on Mondays and Maple that meet on Thursdays.

They usually meet weekly to take part in a wide range of activities including games, crafts, singing, visits and finding out about the local community, along with plenty of outdoor activities.

Beavers will normally work towards badges and awards as part of the programme, developing new skills and giving a sense of achievement.

cubs

Cubs are young people aged 8 to 10½ - a mixture of both girls and boys

We have 2 sections Lions that meet on Mondays and Tigers that meet on Thursdays.

- Master new skills and try new things
- Have fun and go on adventures
- Make friends
- Are curious about the world around them
- Help others and make a difference, in their own communities and beyond

Every week, they gather in groups called **Cub Packs** to take part in lots of interesting and challenging activities - achieving anything they set their minds to, and having lots of fun along the way.





SCOUTS

Scouts are young people aged between 10½ to 14 years - a mixture of both girls and boys

We have one section - Rowallan who meet on a Friday

- Master new skills and try new things
- Make new friends
- Have fun and go on adventures, at home and abroad
- Explore the world around them
- Help others and make a difference, in their own communities and beyond

Scout Troops normally meet weekly learning skills for life!



Swiss Valley

We are very lucky through the dedication of previous members of the group and supporters to own Swiss Valley in Loose. It consists of 44 Acres of land which is a mix of woodland and open pastoral land. It spans from Atkins Hill in Boughton Monchelsea to Salts Lane in Loose Village. The land gives the group the opportunity to have activities, meetings and camping outside anytime they want. The land also provides grazing land for local sheep and 2 fishing lakes for a local club.





We are very fortunate to have this facility for ourselves which we can also provide further facilities to other scout groups and the local community.

Roles

With the Size of Loose Swiss we have a number of varying roles that anyone can get involved in, these are not time dependent i.e. the number of hours you have to give up They each have different roles and responsibilities.

Trustee

A Trustee will sit on a selected committee who includes the Chair, Treasurer and GSL. The Trustees have the overall responsibility for governance, finance and accountability for the group.

The Trustees meet 4 times a year including the AGM and have equal legal and moral responsibilities these include but are not limited to: _

- Manage the groups money to ensure there is enough money for now and in the future. Including the agreement and management of budgets
- Follow Scouts policies and relevant legislation and ensure these are being managed and followed within the group
- Look after buildings, insurance and property
- Manage risks, which includes maintaining a risk register and put the right risk mitigations in place.
- Help the charity to operate well, today and in the future





- Work with Lead Volunteers to meet their charity aims.
- Champion the volunteering culture, and make sure volunteers are aware of it, reflect on it, commit to it, and apply it in their teams.

Leaders

A Leader role can come in many different variations, but this is generally the most hands on role in scouting and includes interaction with the young people. This is sometimes classed as the biggest challenge but also the most rewarding. A Leader would normally have an association with one particular section ie cubs or beavers or you may want to be on a particular night of the week. There is plenty of opportunity to come and try and see any section that you may like or to just get a greater idea of what may be involved in scouting in Loose.

We also run a 4-week challenge from Kent scouts which is to encourage adults to have a go at being a Scout volunteer for 4 weeks and at the end you can get your very own badge as well to start your collection.

For these roles there is some mandatory training that needs to be taken to qualify you for the role of assistant leader in the section as well as the standard DBS check. This will allow you to carry out activities on your own but also give you a better understanding of scouting and what you can provided to the young people.

If you would like there is an opportunity to further yourself and through some further training modules you can obtain your wood beads, which is a traditional leader emblem which you can wear along with your group scarf. This will qualify you as a section leader and give you greater opportunities to organise and run the section activities yourself with the assistance of other leaders in the section.

There is always further training for specialist activities or events that can be organised to give you that greater challenge or a personal achievement. All training will be supported by the group and the GSL as well as a training advisor to help and assist you through any qualifications that may be required.

Helper or Occasional Helper

A helper or Occasional Helper can be as flexible or regular as you would like. You can help at specific section or be a general helper with the group. This can also be on the scouting side with the young people or with other activities we have as a group. Like general maintenance or upkeep of the HQ.





We value anytime that someone is willing to volunteer towards the group and really does help us keep the sections running. With leaders and helpers, we also need enough to run each night and also each activity, without leaders and helpers we are unable to provide the programme and the time that we would like to, to the young people.

If you are a regular helper, i.e. no more than twice a month, then there is no specific training that you require (though you are welcome to challenge yourself) but we do have to ask you to complete a simple DBS check.

Supporters Committee

The Supporters Committee do a fantastic job in assisting to support and raise funds through various events and activities which bring a much-needed income into the group. The money raised really does help keep the costs down for the younger people to enjoy scouting. The Committee carry out around 3 jumble sales each year, as well as attending other local fetes and organising quiz evenings etc. The Committee is always looking for extra hands to make life easier with events etc and this may not need to be on a regular basis.

Valley Warden

By Becoming a Valley Warden you will join a core team of individuals who contribute to the up keep and maintenance of this large estate, which is a big challenge. The team volunteer time to repair and replace fences, keep footpaths free, manage woodland and the environment. The team is lead by the head warden and they meet a couple of times a month on regular Saturday work parties.

By becoming a Warden you can help in the upkeep, security and management of the Valley and the facilities all year round. It is a great opportunity to be in the outdoors and explore nature.

There is regular work to be carried out in the valley with camps, activities or maintenance outside of the regular work partis. You don't need any particular backgrounds or qualifications to do these jobs any training required can be provided on the job. It may be just as simple as having time to walk your dog through the valley and survey for certain issues.





What Can you do?



We are always looking for volunteers and leaders to help us deliver the diverse and challenging programme that we want to for the young people of Loose.

As you have seen above we have many different roles and there is always a job for someone, whether you have very limited time or have lots of time to give up or want to take on a new challenge.

Being part of Loose is not just about providing for young people it is also about YOU! You have a chance to meet new people be part of a great team in Loose Swiss and this is your chance to shape the future. We always have time for personal challenges and development no matter what you want to do. You can also obtain skills for like first aid or having the ability to take children away for a night under the stars.

Scouts can make you feel good in other ways too. We'll guide you to an opportunity where you'll:

- Make friends and meet people
- Try new things and challenge yourself
- Get outdoors and get stuck in
- Learn your own skills
- Positively impact your community
- Create vital opportunities for young people
- Make memories that'll last a lifetime

If you can only occasionally help, that's OK. Whether you'd like to be an activity planner, tea-maker or craft creator, we appreciate any time you can spare.





Further Links in Scouting

Please use the links below to find more information about Scouting and Volunteering

<https://www.looseswissscouts.com> - The home for Loose Swiss Scouts online

<https://www.maidstonewestscouts.org.uk> - The Home of Maidstone West Scouts

<https://www.kentscouts.org.uk> - The Home of Kent Scouts

<https://www.scouts.org.uk/volunteer> - Contains information about Volunteering with the Scouts

Thank you

Thank you very much for your interest in Loose Swiss or Volunteering for Scouting in Loose. We always must be clear that if we don't have enough Leaders and helpers for the sections then we are unable to run them at full capacity or at all and this affects the activities and the evenings that we can provide in Scouting. If you require any further information, then please use the links above and if you need any more information about Loose Swiss or any questions then please contact us on the details below.





Contact Details

Steve Harley – *Group Scout Leader* – gsl@looseswisscouts.com

07751213657

Audrey Beeching - *AGSL Beavers & Cubs* –
Beavers_cubs@looseswisscouts.com

Debbie Hayes – *Group Chair* – chair@looseswisscouts.com

Mark Sunnocks – *Secretary & Supporters Committee* –
groupadmin@looseswisscouts.com

Colin Flack – *Head Warden* – landwardens@looseswisscouts.com

