

FOLLOW MY YOUNG LEADER

Melanie Palmer looks at how the new Young Leader's Scheme has worked out around the country – and finds it fit, flexible and flourishing

Over the past year, we have seen articles in *Scouting Magazine* explaining the Young Leaders' Scheme and how it might work. Let's look at some successful Young Leaders' Scheme models (...but not Jodie Kidd, I'm afraid!).

There are many great things about the Young Leaders' Scheme, but the most important is that we are supporting and training young people in a leadership role, to do the job well and confidently, and ensure that we are doing that in a fun and inspiring way.

If you haven't got the Young Leaders' Scheme in your District yet, never fear – the investigative journalists that lurk at Gilwell (mainly in the stationery cupboards) have been asking the right questions on your behalf, and here are the answers they rooted out.

Does everybody have the Young Leaders' Scheme up and running?

Not yet. In many Districts, it was decided that the Young Leaders' Scheme (released slightly later than the rest of the Explorer Scout Programme) could wait on the back burner while they got the structure of the other Units in the District sorted out.

In nearly all of these cases, they are now finding an urgent need to get the Scheme going, because the young people have heard about it and are desperate to get going!

Other Districts may not have gone live with the new Programme yet. They are going to launch it all at once on the deadline of 31 December, and are getting

all the infrastructure in place now, ready to support that.

Does everybody run the Scheme in the same way?

No. As with many aspects of the Explorer Scout provision, there is a lot of flexibility, so that it can be set up to suit your local circumstances and make the most of your resources and manpower and to provide the best opportunities for your Young Leaders. Of course, the feelings of the young people need to be taken into account – how often they feel they need to meet, etc.

Give me some examples

Ok – I've got six very different ones: Five Districts, very close geographically. At the moment, everything is very exciting because three of the Districts are merging. These Districts will each have their own Young Leaders' Unit, meeting together to support the Young Leaders, but they are also pooling resources to allow the Young Leaders to get maximum opportunities.

Each District will run the full complement of modules during the year and then they will share the dates of their Modules. The members will be able to choose to go to any of the training modules in the Districts. This may mean that the Young Leader gets to choose between weekends or different weeknights, a variety of times and places, to suit them – much more than could be offered by their own District alone.

- **District A** has a Young Leaders' Unit that meets once a month, on a

Tuesday night (the only night when Beavers, Cubs and Scouts in the District don't meet) allowing all the Young Leaders to attend. Some of the Young Leaders are also in another of the District Explorer Scout Units, but others are not.

They have been meeting for nearly a year and have completed half the modules. They also do other activities together, covering some of the aspects of the fuller Explorer Scout Programme.

There are ten Young Leaders in the Unit, and they work together very well. The Leader and the DESC are now looking at ways they can encourage members of the other Units to join the Young Leaders' Unit for the service elements of their Awards.

- In **County B**, only one of the eight Districts has an established Young Leaders' Unit. The other seven Districts have seen the need for one and are in the processes of launching their Young Leaders' Units.

To support those Districts while this is happening, the County is putting on a Young Leaders' Weekend, comprised of five of the modules. The aim is to encourage the participants to begin to get a sense of identity as Young Leaders, to get Module A under their belts, and to mix with other Young Leaders who have been doing modules on the scheme for a while (as the established Unit is helping to run the weekend).

- **Districts C and D** are quite small Districts, and they share a District



The new Scheme is aiming to encourage and inspire young people who wish to become Leaders

Explorer Scout Commissioner. It was decided that they should also share a Young Leaders' Unit.

Both District Executives support this, and co-ordinate carefully with one another in their support of the Section, including the Young Leaders' Scheme.

- **District E** is a city-based District, fairly small in area, but large in numbers and with a lot of Groups. The Young Leaders' Unit meets for a weekend once every term at the District campsite.

They run a series of Modules as well as team-building and adventurous activities. Module A is not included in this weekend, but is run on an evening once in each half term, for new Young Leaders and people doing the Service elements of Awards.

Explorer Scouts who are not part of the Young Leaders' Scheme are invited to come on the weekend too, to encourage them to become Young Leaders. Young Leaders are sent the Programmes for the rest of the District.

- **Area F** is enormous and very rural (and mountainous). The Districts are enormous in catchment area, but sparsely populated. There is one Young Leaders' Unit to cover the whole Area.

They co-ordinate the Modules being run in local pockets by a Section Leader. One of the Young Leaders might work with this Leader. The modules are opened up to anybody else who wants to go.

The Young Leaders' Unit Leader has also adapted Module A, so it can be run as a correspondence course via email. New Young Leaders work in pairs or threes on the module so that they can discuss the various aspects, but are guided through it by another Young Leader who has already done it.

The Young Leaders' Unit has their own secure Unit site on the internet, where they can leave Programme ideas and messages for one another, and generally socialise over long distances. They also meet up for a week, either camping or staying in one of the Meeting Places for a few days each school holiday, where they can do some of the Modules, and actually meet each other.

The Scheme has only been running since last October, and over time, the Young Leaders' Scheme may change in its provision, dictated by the needs that arise. These are just a few of the set-ups that have been proposed in different areas.

Are there any other issues that I might need to be aware of?

There are still a lot of 14 to 18 year-olds out there helping with the younger Sections or their old Troop. These people must be accounted for. They need to be registered on the census as Explorer Scouts because they are aged between 14 and 18. As Explorer Scouts helping in another Section, they will be in the Young Leaders' Unit. They must then do Module A within three months. If they are not Explorer Scouts, then they are not insured!

There is a wonderful new badge for the Young Leaders' Scheme. It is to be awarded on completion of Module A to show that the person is a Young Leader. It should be available by the time this article is published, and if not, it very soon will be.

There have been a few concerns expressed by Adult Training Managers and Advisers, worried about what part they have to play in the Young Leaders' Scheme. The Young Leaders' Scheme is part of the Explorer Scout provision, not part of Adult Training, and it is under the remit of the District Explorer Scout Commissioner.

You may, however, choose to use the support of your Adult Training Scheme for some aspects, and it may be a good idea to communicate with them when a Young Leader is approaching 18 if they show signs of wanting to become an adult Leader. This will ensure a smooth transition between schemes and to allow recognition to be made of what they have done.

Some Leaders have worried that they need more experience in training, presentation, facilitating and assessing in order to fulfil the role. You do not need to do any more training than any other Explorer Scout Leader. You may choose to get training in these aspects, if you feel it would help, but you do not have to.

The best praise of the Young Leaders' Scheme is that the young people really want to be part of it. Those that are part of it praise it, and say confidently that they enjoy the Modules and that they find it all really helpful.

What an accolade to the team who thought of the idea and to all the wonderful Leaders who are making it happen!



DEAR DIARY...

Ed Fish, the District Explorer Scout Commissioner in Grand Haddock District, reveals all about his hectic Scouting month

10 DECEMBER

I've been busy co-ordinating the five Units' Programmes in the District. They are all excellent, though not strictly 'Balanced', with some seeming to focus more on Awards than on the Balanced Programme idea.

Still, that's where I come in, ensuring that Explorer Scouts across the District have access to the Balanced Programme. The Units are all opening up their activities to the rest of the District.

They are using a shared Programme Planning Template (suggested by the District Explorer Scout Administrator) to make it easier.

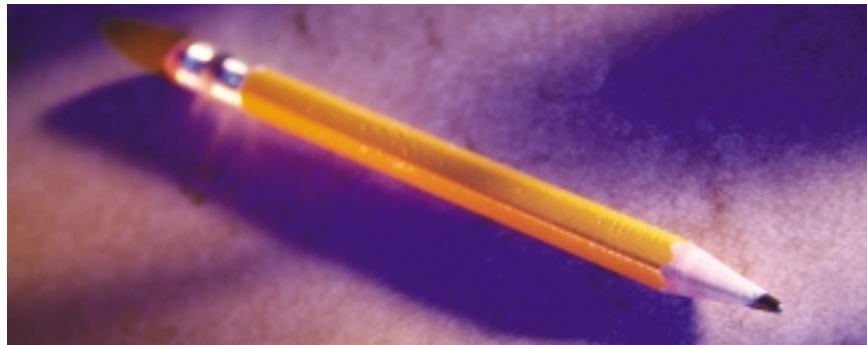
All the Programmes are collated and sent out to the Explorers with information on contacts for each activity. One Explorer Scout suddenly saw the light! "So, if I don't want to train for the Haddock Marathon, which my Unit is doing loads of and it's really boring, is it okay for me to go along to the Columbus Unit to join in with their international project?" Yes!

We've got the District Explorer Scout Committee next week, but before that I'm meeting with the District Explorer Scout Commissioners from the neighbouring four Districts. None of us has the Young Leaders' Scheme up and running yet, so we're meeting to sort something out. Apparently its in the Assistant CC's 'Action Plan'!

20 DECEMBER

Well! I've had such a busy week I don't know where to start! The Young Leaders' Scheme is going to be great. At the meeting, with a potential Explorer Scout Leader (Young Leader) and Young Leaders' Unit candidate in tow, the Assistant County Commissioner (Chris Trout) did a quick recap of the Scheme and then outlined his plan of how we could help one another to implement it.

Two of the smaller Districts are going to share a Unit, and the other three (all



of whom had a potential Leader with us) will have one each.

Each District will put on every Module once per year at a time and place convenient, but Module A (the compulsory one) must be offered twice. We'll all share the dates of our training modules.

One of the Leaders volunteered to collate this into a catalogue of available Module dates across the five Districts. What a great plan! The Districts will be mixing and there's flexibility built in to allow every Young Leader the chance to do the Modules at a time suited to them!

The Units in each District are still going to meet each month to talk through issues, have visitors and support one another with projects. I think it's going to be fabulous.

I talked about all the plans with the Explorer Scouts at the District Explorer Scout Committee (DESCom) a couple of days ago and they were very enthusiastic.

Two of them are Young Leaders and they can't wait to get training. The Sectional Leaders are still a bit confused, so I'll put it on the agenda of the next District Leaders' Meeting. The DESC was keen that there should be good links between the Young Leaders' Unit and the others so the Young Leaders could be encouraged to take advantage of the fuller programme of Explorer Scouts.

I've been to Christmas parties and Christmas dinners left right and centre - I'm going to be fatter than a pork pie at this rate! Some of the Units have had

their Christmas festivities as 'bring a friend' or 'older Scouts too' events to boost recruitment, and I've been delighted to see quite a few of the events reported in the local newspaper, as well as some of the Community Service projects that a couple of the Units have been doing in the run up to Christmas, for the homeless shelter and the day care centres for the elderly.

30 DECEMBER

I've been thinking about New Year's Resolutions and what we need to do to take Explorer Scouts in Grand Haddock District into the New Year.

The major thrust is going to have to be finances. While things are happening for the Young People, and the District is really beginning to pull together, we are struggling with a consistent financial policy, so that's a main focus.

Also we'll be coming up to our first Annual Review, so that needs careful thought and preparation, and there are several Partnership Agreements to review then too. I'll get my DESA to 'fish' those out for me.

Oh, and several Leaders had agreed to the Warrant on the condition that they could review in 12 months, because it was a new Section, so that's coming up too.

Well, that sorted, I think its time for bed, as I've a long night of partying for New Year's Eve tomorrow night, and there will be more food! ■



PROGRAMMES ON A PLATE

THIS MONTH'S THEME IS SKILLS. WRITTEN BY MELANIE PALMER

TIME	ACTIVITY	ZONE	METHOD	INSTRUCTIONS
One evening and then longer term project	Photography	Skills	Technology, Working with others, Visits, Design and creativity	An introductory evening with a visiting photographer could encourage Explorers doing Awards to take up photography as their skill. At the end of three, six or twelve months, they could lead a team of other Explorer Scouts, teaching them the skills needed to do a short photography project resulting in a set of publicity photographs for the Explorer Scout Section in their District.
Two evenings	Birdboxes	Skills, Environment	Working with others, Design and creativity, Learn new skills	Make bird boxes. Learn how to do it first and then instruct Cub Scouts. This could be a link activity with the Young Leaders' Unit, as part of the Environment Group Award, or to help the Cubs towards gaining a Badge.
Planning Evening and weekend activity	Art attack	Skills	Working with others, Design and creativity, Learn new skills	If your Meeting Place is in need of brightening up, inside or out, plan out a design for a mural. Submit it to the owners of the building, and if they approve, get creative! You will need to book out a weekend for this activity, and provide overhead cover if you are painting in an exposed area.
Evening	Navigation	Skills, outdoors	Games, Outdoor activities	Play a series of compass and orienteering games to put your navigation skills to the test.
Evening	Ceilidh dancing	Skills	Learn new skills	Make one of your events a ceilidh. Book a ceilidh band or barn-dance band and spend the evening having great fun, working up a sweat and learning some wild traditional dances: Eightsome Reel, Strip the Willow, Military Two-step, etc.
Several evenings	Making musical instruments	Skills	Design and creativity, Learn new skills	As informal or formal as you like. You could either visit a real instrument maker and see how it's really done, and try to make a real instrument, or you can create a junk band. Collect together scrap materials and create a range of instruments before composing, practising and performing a piece of music.
Several evenings	Meteorology	Skills, Environment, Outdoors	Visits, Projects, Learn news skills.	Being able to read the weather is a very useful skill for many outdoor activities, particularly in remote areas, and a couple of hours learning what different clouds portend is well worth the bother. Many activity books have chapters on the weather and you could choose the one most appropriate to your favourite activity, e.g. the Mountain Leader's Handbook, or a book on sailing. The Met Office website at www.metoffice.gov.uk has an excellent educational section about Mountain weather. You could even visit your local weather station.