

Trustee's Annual Report

For the period 1st January 2023 to 31st December 2023

Registered with the Charity Commission for England and Wales, number 302291.

This document is issued to demonstrate compliance with the Charities Act 2011 in demonstrating our purpose and activities as being for the public benefit and that the trustees have demonstrated regard to the commission's guidance when exercising any powers or duties to which the guidance is relevant.

Trustees for the period

Name	Role	Dates acted (if not entire period)
Hayley Simes	Group Chairperson (ex-officio)	
Steven Osborn	Group Scout Leader (ex-officio)	
Mel Green	Group Secretary (ex-officio)	
Steven Ball	Group Treasurer (ex-officio)	
Faye Osmond	Beaver Scout Leader (ex-officio)	
Sarah Challis	Cub Scout Leader (ex-officio)	
Craig Challis	Cub Scout Leader (ex-officio)	
Joe Simes	Scout Leader (ex-officio) and Quartermaster	
Max Simes	Assistant Scout Leader (nominated)	01.01.23–06.07.23
Kerie Wallace	Explorer Scout Leader (ex-officio)	
Heather Ball	Cub Scout parent representative (elected)	
Grace Angove	Scout parent representative (elected)	09.02.23-

Structure, Governance and Management

The charity's governing documents are those of the Scout Association. The Scout Association's governing document is a royal charter which gives authority to the *Bye-laws* of the Association and the *Policy, Organisation and Rules* of the Scout Association. The group is a trust established under these rules which are common to all Scout groups. At the previous AGM, we reconfirmed our use of the model constitution as laid out in *Policy, Organisation and Rules* 5.4.

The trustees are appointed in accordance with the *Policy, Organisation and Rules* of the Scout Association (POR).

The group is managed by an elected board of trustees, comprising a Group Chairperson, Group Scout Leader, Group Treasurer and Group Secretary along with individual section leaders, parent's representatives and others nominated onto the committee for their knowledge or skills. The Trustee Board meets every two months on average.

The Group Board of Trustees exists to ensure Scouting is run safely, legally and in line with our charitable purpose. They must be confident that:

- The charity is well managed, carrying out its purpose for the public benefit,
- Our activities comply with our governing document and the law,
- We are following *POR* and the rules of the Charity Commission
- Young people are meaningfully involved in decision making at all levels
- The group has sufficient resources to meet the planned work of the group.

The group has systems that are designed to provide reasonable assurance against material mismanagement and loss. These include requiring two signatories for all payments made by any section within the group, expenditure of a certain amount being approved by a wider group of leaders, maintaining a risk register of potential risks to the charity and mitigating against these and insurance policies to ensure that insurable risks are covered.

Objectives of the group

The objectives of the group are as part of the wider Scout Association. The purpose of the Scout Association is “to actively engage and support young people in their personal development, empowering them to make a positive contribution to society.”

This is achieved through the Scout Method which states that “Scouting takes place when young people, in partnership with adults, work together based on the values of Scouting and:

- enjoy what they are doing and have fun;
- take part in activities indoors and outdoors;
- learn by doing;
- share in spiritual reflection;
- take responsibility and make choices;
- undertake new and challenging activities;
- and make and live by their Promise.”

We are guided by the Values of Scouting which are:

- Integrity: We act with integrity; we are honest, trustworthy and loyal.
- Respect: We have self-respect and respect for others.
- Care: We support others and take care of the world in which we live.
- Belief: We explore our faiths, beliefs and attitudes.
- Co-operation: We make a positive difference; we co-operate with others and make friends.

In line with the Scout Association, our goals to 2025 are based around achieving:

- Growth; enabling more young people and adult volunteers to benefit from scouting and the skills it gives them.
- Inclusivity; ensuring barriers to inclusion are removed and working to build tolerance.
- Community impact; making a difference in our local and global community.
- Youth-shaped; ensuring our young people get a voice in scouting, share their experiences and take on leadership roles.

Activities

The 2023 calendar year saw the newest branch of the Scouts family tree come to the group with the launch of the Squirrels Scouts Drey bringing the Scouts programme to early years children. Running from a child's fourth birthday up until the transition to Beaver Scouts at around age 6, the new section mixes the Scout traditions of getting outdoors and trying new skills with a simple programme based around stories, song, games and activities. A trial period was run from around Easter through into the summer and continued from there to the current day, with Vanessa Slawson helping with the trials and with Joe, Vicky, Sarah, Scott and Melissa taking the lead for the rest of the year to great success. As the year closed, efforts were underway to recruit the new generation of Squirrels leaders from the parents of the young people.

With the exception of our Squirrels, all our sections took part in confidence and skills building Nights Away from home. The Beavers enjoyed a District sleepover at Calshot Activity Centre and their own at Injoy barely a month later with a camp in the summer and a Christmas sleepover to boot. Our Cubs enjoyed a sleepover at Jungle Jeans, along with Wolf Camp and Summer Camp during the nicer months while Scouts had the Camping Competition, Eagle Trophy and May Camp as key nights away opportunities.

The young people continue to attend district events as they return and adapt to the new bigger district; among those events not already mentioned, the Beavers attended a district Campfire and Christingle, our award holders took part in an Awards day at Ferny Crofts and the Scouts took part in two Stag's Head trophies. Additionally, our Beavers took part in the County's day to Paulton's Park and Marwell Zoo, our Cubs returned to the Panto in December and the RNLI Lifeboat station at Calshot in March, and our Squirrels took to Ferny Crofts for their Squirrel Fun Day which was loved by all. This in addition to the various other active nights, including multiple cycling evenings and Bouldering for the Scouts too.

In November, the group's adults and young people from all sections attended the Remembrance Day Service in Totton, although the planned St. George's Day service in Burley was called off due to the aftermath of a wet winter. November also saw host to an all sections Maintenance Day, taking on a number of tasks around our hall and bringing many young people and parents getting stuck in.

The Totton Santa Run and Christmas Fayre fought against cost-of-living concerns and worries due to late applicants to be a comfortably profitable event this year and the Donkey Derby in May was a massive success, thanks to the hard work of the organising team along with the volunteers from both the group and Eling who helped make the day happen.

We have been able to recruit a number of new adult volunteers this year to support in some roles within the group. Our efforts still continue as more are needed in certain sections to ensure sustainable growth and support, and Young Leaders have been fewer in number this year.

Achievements

By the end of the year, the group had grown again, with the Squirrel section making up for lower numbers in the Beavers notably, and the induction of a number of additional volunteers into the Cubs and Scout sections in particular. Satisfaction with the group remains high and young people were able to make their thoughts known to the trustees. The year ended with all adults fully compliant in their roles and with their training following months and years of hard effort from the volunteers concerned and those who support the scheme.

The success of the Totton Santa Run solidifies our template for the event as a successful, deliverable event for the group that really excels with the full support of our community. The runaway success of the Donkey Derby has given the group a much needed boost to finances when costs are ever increasing, without the need to draw further from our parents' pockets. This helps not only develop our HQ, but keep Scout activities affordable so those who need us most can benefit from the skills that Scouts teaches. In also providing such as well regarded and well run community event solidified the group at the heart of the Totton community in a way difficult to do previously.

Through these activities, the Trustees are confident that the Group meets the Charity Commission's public benefit criteria under both the advancement of education and the advancement of citizenship or community development headings.

Financial overview

While membership within the group increased by the end of the year, this was primarily through the launch of the new Squirrel Scout section, who did not pay membership fees for much of the 2023 year. Therefore, membership fees remained similar with a £500 decrease compared to the previous year. 2022 was a very busy year for activities, so income from activity fees decreased by £700 in line with expectations.

There was a notable increase in donations this year (2023: £641, 2022: £70) and the group was able to claim GiftAid on donations after a backlog following the pandemic and a change of Treasurer – this brought in £4,641 for the group from the government. There was also £900 in grants received this year linked to the setting up of the new Squirrels Drey from a combination of Scouting within the New Forest, Hampshire and nationally.

Income from the Santa Run and Christmas Fayre was £5,348; it was noted last year that the 2022 figure of £6,485 was higher as some raffle income from the 2021 event was not banked until 2022. Income from other sources such as donations and streams such as through Easy Fundraising or donations of clothing increased slightly this year as new parents learned about these fundraising streams.

The largest new stream of income, by far, was the Donkey Derby which in 2023 was run by the 5th Testwood Group. The event brought in income of £11,868 before expenses. Income from hire of our hall remained steady at just short of £3,000. **In total, income for 2023 was £52,750**, a significant increase of over £13,700 on 2022.

Charitable expenditure compared to last year saw a further increase of around £5,000 with notable price increases on the different unavoidable costs associated with our running. Despite a modest increase in membership numbers, the membership fees that are paid on to District, County and National increased for us by £1,200. Spending on youth programme and activities was largely unaffected, with a small drop in spending of around £500.

Expenses on repairs, renewals, stationary, uniform and badges and cleaning fell compared to the year before, with uniform and badges being a notable drop as sections topped up their badge stocks the year previously and with a surplus of national events. 2023 saw the Coronation, with a commemorative badge purchased for each member of the group, but this required fewer badges than the year before when there were three events where all members received badges (The Queen's Platinum Jubilee, In Remembrance of the Queen and Remembrance Sunday).

As expected, rises in the costs of insurance, materials and equipment was experienced. After lengthy negotiations with the council about our lease, this was resolved at the beginning of 2023 which saw the new higher payment and back payments being made, in total a cost of £1,620. Additionally, higher costs of energy, and errors in reporting that were rectified in 2023, saw cost of utility bills increase sharply by £3,000 during the year. While much of this was covering payments for energy used, we expect energy bills to continue to be substantial in future years.

Payments associated with the Totton Santa Run and Christmas Fayre were around £3,000 lower than 2022 as we benefitted from having topped up needed supplies the previous year. The cost of putting on the Donkey Derby was £6,482. **In total, expenditure was £43,020**, around £7,000 higher than 2022.

In 2023, the Board of Trustees agreed to look again at the £1,328 restricted funds held within the account. This was always set aside for equipment for activities, initially a climbing wall. As feasibility determined it would be impractical to install a wall at the hall, the aim of the funds was redirected, and agreed by Group Council, into supplying upgraded AV equipment in the hall which would benefit all users. These plans are due to come to fruition in 2024.

Reserves Policy

The Group's policy on reserves is to hold sufficient resources to continue the charitable activities of the group should income and fundraising activities fall short. The Group's Board of Trustees considers that the group should hold the following reserves:

- a sum equivalent to 24 months running costs (£8,000).
- a fund for the replacement/maintenance of assets such as the hall and equipment (£1,500)
- Section support (by request) (£500)

These reserves were last reviewed and agreed at a Board of Trustees meeting on 22nd February 2018. It is due to be revisited in the 2024 year.

Investment Policy

The Group does not have sufficient funds to invest in longer term investments and therefore has adopted a risk-averse strategy to the investment of its funds. All funds are held in cash using only mainstream banks and The Scout Association's Short Term Investment Service.

This latter service was closed in April 2023, and the £10,861.92 held within was returned to the group. It continues to serve as our reserve fund. This policy is due to be revisited during the 2024 year.

Future plans

With newer volunteers beginning to become confident in their roles, work continues to recruit and welcome more, especially into Squirrels and Beavers, to keep these sections sustainable and to enable growth in the numbers of young people in these sections.

Our adult volunteers in the section continue to develop their own skills, with a number working on achieving Adventurous Activity Permits so adventurous activities can be safely delivered by the group's adults. A number will also be on track to earn their Wood badge this year coming.

All ages of the group continue to plan an ambitious array of events and residential activities including a District Camp to be held at Ferny Crofts in May. Offering our young people to network with other young people from across the newly expanded District, as well as try new adventurous activities with a range of choice, the camp promises to be a great opportunity for the young people and planning was underway at the turn of the year.

The Donkey Derby in May also brings new opportunities for the group as, for the first time, a joint event is proposed with both Eling and Testwood providing resources and people power to run the event with the bonus that this can make the event bigger and better than before. The fundraising potential of this, as well as the Totton Santa Run, help unlock a number of our ambitions to improve our headquarters which is much loved but in desperate need of some attention.

In addition to maintenance days, we aim to complete some repairs to our facilities and roof and complete some upgrades to our electrics to bring them into line with modern regulations. We continue to search for a cleaner for the hall to keep it in the best condition possible.

Changes to Scout processes and rules are afoot in the coming future with the aim to demystify the organisation to prospective volunteers and parents, simplify some roles and strengthen the governance functions of the Trustee board by responding to recent changes. While the exact date for a number of these is unknown, some will begin to take effect in time of or before the next AGM. The group's leadership is ready for these Transformation changes, when they come within 2024 or 2025. In the meantime, compliance, great opportunities, and skills for life continue to drive the group.

The Trustees declare that they have approved the trustee's report above.

Signed on behalf of the trustees of the 5th Testwood Scout group:

Date: