

Trustee's Annual Report

For the period 1st January 2024 to 31st December 2024

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) <i>Chair of Board of Trustees</i>	
Steven Osborn	Group Scout Leader (ex-officio) <i>Group Lead Volunteer</i>	
Mel Green	Group Secretary (ex-officio) <i>Trustee</i>	
Steven Ball	Group Treasurer (ex-officio) <i>Treasurer</i>	
Faye Osmond	Beaver Scout Leader (ex-officio) <i>Beaver Team Leader</i>	
Sarah Challis	Cub Scout Leader (ex-officio) <i>Cub Team Leader</i>	
Craig Challis	Cub Scout Leader (ex-officio) <i>Cub Team Leader</i>	
Joe Simes	Scout Leader (ex-officio) <i>Scout Team Leader</i>	
Kerie Wallace	Explorer Scout Leader (ex-officio) <i>Explorer Team Leader</i>	
Heather Ball	Cub Scout parent representative (elected) <i>Trustee</i>	
Grace Angove	Scout parent representative (elected) <i>Trustee</i>	

In December 2024, The Scout Association updated role titles for all volunteers. The updated role titles used from this date are included in italics.

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, at time of writing rule 5c.1.

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 Chair, Group Lead Volunteer, Treasurer and other Trustees to represent our parents and others nominated onto the committee for their knowledge or skills. One Trustee maintains the ceremonial role of Group Secretary and takes charge of ensuring meetings are recorded correctly. The Trustee Board aims to meet every two months on average.

The 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 2024 calendar year saw a varied and quality programme offered to the young people based at 5th Testwood Scouts, from the age 4 to 18 years, and covering a huge range of skills appropriate to the age ranges of the five sections. Efforts to strengthen the leadership teams of a number of sessions have been successful with the support of a Growth and Development Officer from Hampshire Scouts. The summer of 2024 saw a successful handover between volunteer teams of the Squirrels section, with new volunteers recruited and releasing Joe and Vicky after their help in setting up the section to re-focus onto their other older sections. Additionally, efforts to recruit new volunteers for the Wednesday Rover Test Beaver colony were successful, with the section rescued from the brink of closure at the start of the year.

All sections of the group have enjoyed a nights away opportunity, with more planned, with the highlight being a District Camp at Ferny Crofts involving all sections taking part in adventurous activities over several zones and themes and with an 'Around the World' theme complete with costume, decoration and traditional scouting skills including campfires and evening activities.

In addition, many of our sections were able to enjoy nights away through the year; the Beavers enjoyed a District sleepover in February and their own sleepover in June. Cubs took part in a January based Wild West Parent and Cub camp, an islands themed Summer Camp in August, and a residential in November at Broadstone Warren Scout Adventures, taking advantage of external funding to reduce any financial pressures faced by our new cohort of Cubs, many of whom weren't able to attend earlier in the year. Scouts meanwhile took part in their February Polar camp, Camping competition in June, Expedition Challenge camp in early July and the annual Summer Camp in late July before rounding out the camping season with the County organized Chaos Camp in September.

The group's adults and young people from all sections assembled on a few occasions this year for Group events; in July at Lymington Salt Water Baths for a summer's evening of water-based fun to bond the group, showed dignity and service in November by attending the Remembrance Day Service in Totton, and many joined us that same month for a Maintenance Day, taking on a number of tasks around our hall and grounds to care for our hall for the year ahead.

The two fundraising events this year were wildly successful and helped boost the finances of the group and our aspirations to make improvements to our facilities. The Donkey Derby in May, held for the first time jointly between Eling and Testwood Scout groups, raised a very healthy profit for the group from the community fun day and event, and equally making a positive contribution to the image of Scouts. Despite tense weather warnings which saw many other events cancelled, the Totton Santa Run was able to go ahead and led to one of our best attended and most profitable of these events in their run. Our thanks of course go to the organising teams and the many volunteers who helped make these events such a success.

Achievements

As outlined by our summary of the Group's activities above, 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.

Awards of badges and challenge awards, as well as the Top Awards for the section, remained strong and the number of nights away activities offered allowed excellent access for all our young

people. Satisfaction with the group remains high and young people were able to make their thoughts known to the trustees.

Numbers of adult volunteer grew slightly within the year, with a number of new volunteers welcomed into their role to replace others who were scaling back or retiring from their roles. Our adult volunteers were fully compliant by the end of the year.

Membership numbers saw a dip this year, with 99 recorded in the January 2025 census down from 121 in January 2024. There was slight growth in Squirrels, and Beavers saw an increase from a slump the previous year. The slump in new joiners observed elsewhere over the past few years saw fewer Cubs this year, with Scouts returning to their regular levels from a high point.

The success of both the Totton Santa Run and the Donkey Derby this year saw a buoying of the charities finances in the face of rising costs, unlocking major development projects of our facilities, the providing of excellent community events to our local area and the advancement of Scouting's image and brand also.

Financial overview

Income for 2024 remained varied and healthy in the face of increasing costs associated with running the charity and its activities. Membership fees saw a modest increase (2024: £15,845, 2023: £15,098) and activity fees were £2,000 higher due to a more packed programme of events than usual including the District Camp. Donations remained high (2024: £588, 2023: £641) and income from hiring our hall to various other community groups increased by around £1,200 (2024: £4,148, 2023: 2,960). The group was able to claim GiftAid on donations, however this was received by the group in 2025 and will form part of accounts for that year.

Income from the Santa Run and Christmas Fayre was £7,623, a brilliant increase on the previous year (2023: £5,348) compared to a similar cost base. The Donkey Derby brought in £8,969 to the group after being shared with Eling Sea Scouts with whom the event was jointly delivered. While this is less than the previous year when the group delivered the event alone (2023: £11,868), the bigger event brought in much more income in total, and through sharing resources and volunteers allowed for a more satisfactory event to volunteers and community alike. **In total, income for 2024 was £50,100**, around £2,500 less than 2023 but remaining at the higher level established that year.

Charitable expenditure increased by £2,200 compared to last year with continuing increases on the different unavoidable costs associated with our running. Membership fees that are paid on to District, County and National increased for us by around £800, and with such an active programme, spending on youth programme and activities increased significantly (2024: £19,293, 2023: £14,975) mostly a result of the District Camp.

There were expected increases in expenditure for adult support and training as leaders completed activity permits, badges as young people achieved more, and insurance, repairs and renewals and stationary and printing from inflation in these areas. There was a large investment in equipment this year, mainly ahead of the District Camp and in WiFi and AV equipment for the hall (2024: £4,763, 2023: £1,088) which also used the £1,328 reserved funds set aside for this purpose.

As expected historic backlogs were finally addressed, costs for lease of the hall (2024: £500, 2023: £2,620) and utilities (2024: 3,033, 2023: £4,058) both decreased to expected levels.

Payments associated with the Totton Santa Run and Christmas Fayre were similar to 2023, with a difference of only £116. The cost of putting on the Donkey Derby was £3,402, around half the previous year (2023: £6,482) as expenses were shared with Eling Sea Scouts. **In total, expenditure was £47,872**, around £4,000 higher than 2023.

Reserves Policy

The Group's policy on reserves is to hold sufficient resources to continue the charitable activities of the group should the hall become unusable, or should income and fundraising significantly fail. The Group's Board of Trustees considers that the group should hold reserves of £12,000 based upon the rationale:

- a sum equivalent temporary hire of a hall, for 20 weeks, 10 hours a week at £40 an hour (£8,000).
- a fund for storage, insurance excess and other materials (£4,000)
- loss of hall hire income balanced by savings from utilities and maintenance.
- Sums sufficient to allow for emergency fundraising activities, external grants and support to be organised and arranged.

These reserves were last reviewed and agreed at a Board of Trustees meeting on 12th July 2024.

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 in savings accounts which can be accessed at short notice.

Future plans

The Scout Association's Transformation changes, which came into effect at the end of 2024, have seen the launch of new processes and rules; significant time will be required to bring the group into line with these new processes.

This includes a completely new adult learning scheme, with volunteers needing to complete additional training modules and a new Safety module for the benefit of our young people before the summer holidays in 2025. We need to encourage our volunteers to continue to develop their skills in leading our young people, so we are using these changes to the benefit of our volunteers.

Our recruitment efforts for some sections in 2024 yielded some positive results, however more volunteers are sought for Squirrels on Mondays and are urgently sought for Beavers on Tuesdays to prevent this section's closure. Through discussions with parents, social media campaigns and seeking external support, we are endeavouring to recruit to keep this section open for 6-8 year olds.

Young people across the group continue to have access to a varied and exciting array of events, joint activities with others in the District and County, residential events and adventurous activities as part of the weekly programme. Building on the increasing achievement of badges and completion of the Top Awards, progress in these areas are expected to continue apace.

The group has the benefit of two established fundraising events in the Totton Santa Run and Donkey Derby and following the success of the first joint Donkey Derby with Eling, these will

provide the group with a strong financial footing for our charitable purposes and our modernisation of our facilities. There are currently three projects in current stages of planning to improve our toilets, repair our leaky roof and replace our external storage, and next year will require significant effort to bring these projects to fruition in the short timescales our volunteers and community expect of us. Outside of these projects, our regular cleaner and annual maintenance days help to look after what we have as best as we can.

2025 and beyond presents the 5th Testwood Scout Group with a number of challenges linked to our buildings, our charitable foundation and preparations for the future. Throughout all of this however, our programme has never been stronger, and the Trustees' efforts are focused on providing the best facilities and footing for our Scouts and volunteers.

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: