

1st Towcester Scouts

Annual Report 2020/21



Is this the Guardian of the Wood?

Spotted by one of our eagle-eyed beavers, Hazelborough Wood, May 2021

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1st Towcester Scout, Annual General Meeting, 9 June 2021, 7.00

Virtual meeting on Zoom

Agenda

1. GSL's Welcome and Introduction
2. Apologies
3. Minutes of the AGM, 22 July, 2020
4. Chairman's Report
5. Group Scout Leader's Report
6. Treasurer's Report and Presentation of Accounts
7. Appointment of Officers:
 - Approve GSL's nomination of Chair
 - Election of Group Secretary
 - Election of Group Treasurer
 - Election of Members for Executive Committee
 - Approve Group Auditors
8. Section Reports: included in Annual Report
9. Presentations: virtual presentations and thanks to leaders
10. Closing remarks from Chair

Minutes of the 1st Towcester AGM, 22 July 2020, on Zoom

1.	GSL's Welcome and Introduction	<p>Michele welcomed everyone to the 2019/20 AGM, a virtual meeting attended via Zoom.</p> <p>Michele welcomed the Chair, Andy Tyrer, and members of the 1st Towcester Executive Committee, District Representative, parents and young members of 1st Towcester Scouts.</p> <p>She also thanked Centurion Scouts who were hosting the meeting. Ben Hatson, from Centurion Scouts, then read a version of the poem 'If' to start the evening's proceedings.</p>
2.	Apologies	Alison Spencer, Sean Spencer
3.	Chairman's Report	<p>Andy gave an outline of his report. Key points were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thanks to all our leaders, and noted the service of those that were leaving us; • Noted that Graham is leaving us at the end of the financial year; • Noted that we are working towards getting back to face to face scouting – risk assessments being done; leaders are also working hard to make sure that we deliver a great programme.
4.	Group Scout Leader's Report	<p>Michele highlighted a number of elements from her report:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thanks to leaders and adult volunteers who have kept scouting going during lockdown; • Thanks to parents and young people for their efforts and continued support; • Noted that we are to start a process to prepare for a return to some face to face scouting. However, for the foreseeable future we should expect virtual scouting to continue, at least in part, and we may have to operate with smaller groups if we hold any face to face sessions. • Parents will receive a copy of the Annual report with a letter outlining the next steps in getting ready for next year's scouting.
5.	Treasurer's Report and Presentation of Accounts	<p>Graham presented the financial report for the group:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Typical year until the last two weeks of the year which is when lock down started. • Slightly higher spending than income, but this has been covered by reserves; • Continued support by Jackie Oliver has helped the overall position. • There will be an impact on income for the financial year due to covid- we will continue to monitor this. This will be offset to some extent by a grant of £10,000 to support voluntary organizations. • Copies of the accounts are available from Graham on request.

6.	<p>Appointment of Officers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Approve GSL's nomination of Chair • Election of Group Secretary • Election of Group Treasurer • Election of Members for Executive Committee • Approve Group Auditors 	<p>GSL nominated Andy Tyrer as Chair of the group. Seconded by Alan Berry. Approved.</p> <p>Chair nominated Michele Dowling as Group Secretary. Seconded by Jen Bucklow. Approved.</p> <p>Michele nominated Graham Scrase as Treasurer of the Group. Seconded by Jenny Smith. Approved.</p> <p>Jenny Smith – proposed by Andy and seconded by Alan Berry. Approved</p> <p>John Smith – proposed by Andy and seconded by Alan Berry. Approved</p> <p>Alison Spencer – proposed in absentia and approved</p> <p>Sean Spencer – proposed in absentia and approved</p> <p>Invitation to the group for anyone who would like to join the executive: Jen Bucklow volunteered – this was approved by the meeting.</p> <p>Group auditors – Essendon proposed by Andy Tyrer and approved.</p>
7.	<p>Section Reports: included in Annual Report</p>	<p>Flavour of all sections activities included in the report.</p> <p>Shows a mix of our face to face activities and the range of work that has been done since lockdown.</p> <p>Section leaders invited to comment.</p> <p>As part of the scout update, Oliver Hunter noted that the Austria trip, scheduled for July 2020, had now been postponed to July 2021 and that there would be a new venue. Fundraising is continuing and recognizing the change of year, if places come available due to individuals dropping out, an invitation will be sent out to cubs and scouts who are now eligible to attend.</p>
8.	<p>Presentations: virtual presentations and thanks to leaders</p>	<p>Andy recognized the input from Alan Berry, Kathy Issac and Cathy Lynn, all of whom were stepping down. We were unable to provide them with a gift in the usual way, but this would be arranged outside of the meeting.</p>
9.	<p>Closing remarks from Chair</p>	<p>Andy thanked to all leaders and volunteers for their support during the year.</p> <p>Thanks also to local businesses and groups who have offered time and support to our sections.</p> <p>Finally the meeting noted its thanks to Jackie Oliver for their continued support.</p>

Group Chairman's Report

Well here we are again (or should it be still?) after another extraordinary year.

You'll hear shortly from our Group Scout Leader who will commend the enthusiasm and energy that our young people and their parents have continued to demonstrate as we turn scouting on its head.

I will be honest. I enjoy the privilege of being Group Chair so let me use my five minutes to talk about our leadership team who make the whole thing possible.

I work most closely with Michelle who finds more energy from goodness knows where and absolutely binds our group together. Thank you.

Graham leaves us after being possibly the longest serving treasurer. He is quiet, unassuming and modest, leaving us in the best financial shape of our 100+ year history. I have enjoyed the benefit of his expertise, humour and as you would expect with a numbers man, his deliciously black and white approach. With him Jane also hangs up her hat together with Katherine and Lesley. We add them all to our list of past leaders who I promise we will welcome back when we meet again face to face to properly thank. This of course comes with the traditional caveat of a BBQ.

Consider 1st Towcester a business. Alongside finance and administration, we have recruitment, health and safety, IT, compliance, safeguarding, training, service delivery, community liaison, fundraising, asset management, infrastructure and governance - that just gets us to group camp, bangers and mash! The list goes on.

Our leaders – young and not so young - are busy people, with their own families and jobs and commitments. Their time has never been more stretched. Yet they juggle all of that to make 1st Towcester a part of their life, to play their part in an organisation delivering a diverse outward facing programme. They typify the very essence of scouting. I do not for a moment understate this commitment and extend my personal gratitude.

With kindest regards



Andy Tyrer, Chair, 1st Towcester Scouts

Group Scout Leader's Report

A year after our first virtual AGM, we are here again on Zoom to review our most recent year in 1st Towcester Scouts. I don't think any of us imagined that we would still be trying to deal with the pandemic 16 months after the first national lockdown. Over the year, I've been amazed at the resilience of our young people and their parents as we've tried new ways of scouting. Zoom was not for everyone – whether for safeguarding concerns or simply because of the number of hours we'd already been spending on screen - and it has been fantastic to see a few old faces coming back to our sections as we've begun to meet face to face once more.

This report is going to look a bit different from the last few years. I've always liked to use lots of photographs from the sections to show the range of activities we offer our young people and keep text to a minimum. This year, however, we don't have so many photos as the majority of our activities have been on line and lend themselves less to pictures. However, this should not detract from the range of activities that have been offered over the year. As GSL I'd like to say huge thanks to our adult leaders for their imagination over the year.

Not everyone felt that they were able to get involved with virtual scouting. This is true for adults as well as our young people, and that is okay. We've tried to stay in touch over the year with all our members, and as we get back to face to face meetings across all sections we look forward to welcoming back all those we haven't seen for a while.

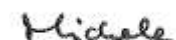
Like all scout groups across the country, we will come back with lower numbers than pre-lockdown. Some of our young people are now doing other things or discovered new interests – we wish you all the best of luck as you learn different things and develop new skills. For some of our adult leaders, they felt that the time had come to hang up their neckers and take their well earned retirement. Thanks for all your efforts over the years Graham, Jane, Katherine and Lesley.

However, we also know that as we come back to regular face to face sessions, we will welcome new members. Membership inquiries have increased in recent months, and Alison has been doing a great job making sure everyone is sent an application form and details on how to volunteer. Despite the challenges over the last year, we are thrilled to welcome some new leaders – Julia to Thursday Beavers, and Lisa who is going to take on our Monday cubs. We are also really pleased to welcome Marie Anne, our new treasurer, and David Reed who we are delighted has agreed to join our Executive. Welcome, and we look forward to working with you over the coming years. We are going to keep up our recruitment drive as we are really keen to re-start the Wednesday scout group, but can only do this if we can recruit leaders to the group. Please get in touch if you'd like to find out more about volunteering with us.

Finally, I'd like to welcome our newest and youngest (unofficial) member – congratulations to Chris and Stephanie, our cub leaders, on the birth of their daughter in March this year. I'm sure we'll be meeting her as we get back to face to face activities in the autumn.

Here's to a better year for us all in 2021/22.

Yours in scouting,



Michele Dowling

Group Treasurer's Report

As anticipated in last year's annual Group report, this financial has been like no other.

Over the years that I've been acting as Treasurer we have managed to build up and maintain what we believed to be a reasonably healthy reserve, but never knowing when it would be needed to be drawn upon. This was the year when our reserves would be put to the test.

Our total income for the year amounted to £27,277, up 26% on last year, this figure was flattered by a couple of grants and a return of payments for an international camp, which regrettably had to be cancelled. The total expenditure for the year came in at £14,815 down 64%.

From the start of the pandemic and lockdown our main sources of income took a big hit, Subscriptions [Subs] fell over 87% to £1,224, whilst our Hall rental from Preschool dropped by over 63% to £1,975. On the expenditure front we did of course take action to reduce our costs where we could. However, at the same time, we spent more, out of lockdown, on enhanced cleaning when PreSchool was able to return to the Hall.

Although there were long periods when it was not possible to operate our usual programme of activities in the Hall, the Scouts Association, for its part, demanded increased fees from its members. However, in spite of the increase, the total amount fell to £3,572, due to the reduction in overall membership of the Group.

As far as group events and camps were concerned, needless to say, income and expenditure were both well down on previous years.

During the year we were anticipating that our reserves would be depleted, but by how much it was difficult to assess. Towards the end of our financial year the Government, through the Local Authorities, offered grants to a range of businesses and organisations. We successfully applied for a couple of grants and received a total of £19,669, this unanticipated largesse has made a significant difference to our reserves, which at the end of the year stood at £40,297. This is the highest figure during my tenure as Group Treasurer and provides a solid backing to the Group's finances.

The Group accounts are currently in the hands Essendon Accounts and Tax and when they have finished their examination a copy will appear on the Charity Commissions website at - www.gov.uk/government/organisations/charity-commission

And on that financial high, I'll be taking my leave as Honorary Treasurer to the Group!

Graham Scrase

Group Treasurer

Feedback from our Sections – some highlights

We will remember this year as one like no other.

It is easy to think of it as the year of things that didn't happen – the hikes we didn't do, the camps that never happened, and for some of our young people the international camp that they didn't get to.

However, I would like us to think about the positive aspects of this last year – and there were plenty.

- We've seen closer working across the two beaver sections, with great partnership between the two leadership groups.
- Scouts had to go down to one section as we've not been able to recruit for the Wednesday group. The Crusaders have had a really varied programme that combined Zoom with face to face – getting back together at the earliest opportunity. The scouts' hiking skills should be second to none after the range of challenges that have been set for them this year!
- Cubs have had a pause over the lock down period, but are coming back stronger than ever after the May half term, with a full programme that will run until the end of the school term.

As mentioned earlier, there are not as many photos this year as we would normally showcase. Please take the time to read the updates from each of our sections.

To all our leaders, young people and their parents...



You've been amazing!



American and Canadian Beavers



We started the new scouting year the way we ended – by bringing our groups together into one section, and offering a virtual programme. Although we could have started out face to face, we discussed our options with parents and we agreed that keeping our beavers safe while maintaining social distancing at all times would be a major challenge, especially as the days grew shorter. We stayed on Zoom until just after Easter when we managed a few in person sessions. We are hoping to see our members every week after half term with face to face sessions planned for each week.

We learnt a lot this year!

- We learned just how amazing our young people are – those that joined us on Zoom took to the virtual world like naturals, and were soon teaching us oldies a thing or two;
- Despite the beavers' best efforts, we learned that Michele still hasn't quite got the hang of Zoom;
- We learned that you can use golden syrup and not make a mess -at least in your own kitchen and using a squeeze bottle. We might try this again in the scout hall, just to test the theory that it was down to the squeeze bottle and not parental influence;
- We learned how to find any place in the world using 'What3Words'. We found our way around Towcester using this app and put all of our places on a map to show where we had been;
- We learned to make hover crafts, which we raced.
- We made pancakes, chocolate biscuit cakes, snake sock puppets and kites; we made bug hotels and grassheads; we made cards and Halloween lanterns; we toasted marshmallows on Swedish firelogs in our gardens on the 5th November.
- At Christmas we made advent calendar windows and delivered home made Christmas cards to the Ridgeway Centre for their residents. That was a much appreciated gift.
- We learned how to stay safe, and earned our cycle badges.
- We learned French with Fran (merci, Fran!)
- We did lots more, and are using the longer evenings to get out and enjoy the outdoors. We've already done our first hike (Hazelborough Woods) and are planning more out activities before the end of term (one of these might even involve ice cream from a recently opened shop in Towcester...).
- We also learned that our beavers have fabulous parents, without whom we could not have run the sessions. Thank you from all of the Beaver leaders.

We also welcomed two young leaders this year: Orianne, who had been helping us before this year, joined us officially and Ben joined us in March 2021. We are delighted to have you both on the team.

We said goodbye to Lesley and Katherine at different times during the year, and welcomed Julia who joined as an assistant leader early this year. Here's to a new year of Beavering!!

Michele, Adam and the team



Panther and Lion Cubs

The two Cub packs had a very quiet 2020-2021, but are on the move again having had their first face to face meeting on Monday 7th of June and a full program of weekly meetings to take us through to the Summer holidays. During this time we will visit Hazelborough wood, get our hiking boots back on and fire up the firepits for some backwoods cooking!

The Cub packs had limited engagement in online scouting during the last year, with few Cubs taking up the scouting at home prompts or District online events and a combination of screen fatigue and safeguarding concerns among the leadership team. A few cubs who had siblings in beavers contributed to our advent window and Christmas card for the Ridgeway Care home activities. Many thanks for your efforts – they were much appreciated!

Restarting now in 2021 the Cub packs have been merged, with members of both sections meeting as one on Monday evenings. The expectation is that we'll be back to two separate sections running in parallel, with Lions meeting on Monday evenings and Panthers on Tuesday, after the Summer holidays.

There have been some changes among the leadership team. We have been enthusiastically joined by Lisa who has come to the group boosted by her previous scouting experience and will be taking on a leadership role. Stephanie (CSL - Panthers) is taking a step back from leading following the arrival of her and Christopher's (CSL - Lions) second child. Tracey (ACSL - Panthers) and Christian (SA - Panthers) have both seen changes in their careers and have opted to step down from their roles.

If you think you'd be interested in supporting our cubs groups and would like to discuss the options that are available, please get in touch with Michele on gsl@towcesterscouts.org.uk or with Chris on panthercubs@towcesterscouts.org.uk

Onwards and upwards for 2021/22!



Bluebells in Hazelborough Wood

Scouts – Crusaders

When we started Virtual Scouting online at the start of the first Lockdown, we had no idea that we would have to continue delivering Scouting that way for six months.

Whilst meeting virtually, we continued to deliver a challenging and fun programme, with the Scouts completing a large number of badges, including Meteorologist, Photographer, Astronomer, Chef, and Circus Skills. In September we merged with the Centurion Scout Troop, as their leaders decided to take a well earned rest from Scouting.

We had two virtual meetings then were able to meet up in person again. Sadly, this only lasted for five meetings, four of them walking the 12-mile Grafton Way in four short hikes, before we entered the second lockdown and returned to virtual Scouting again. Thankfully, after four virtual meetings, we were allowed to meet up again and managed three in person meetings before Christmas and the third lockdown. We returned to virtual sessions, not knowing it would be four months before we could meet up again.

As I write we have managed six meetings back together and have started walking the 12-mile Knightley Way in three short hikes but only managed one walk before being thwarted, this time by the weather.

Our virtual sessions included: navigation theory, bingo, quizzes, storytelling, talent show, 4 virtual camps, knotting, fundraising (#RaceRoundTheWorld), origami, remembrance, card making, juggling, cooking, bird boxes and our first investitures via Zoom.

In person, we covered: navigation skills, fires, smores, putting up tents, team challenges, hiking and the usual Scout games.

None of this could have been accomplished without my brilliant leadership team – Ben, Bill, Chris, Jen, Magnus, Sammy and our fantastic Young Leaders – Max & Will. It would also all be pointless without our amazing Young People! We are all looking forward to the next year ahead!

Oliver Hunter

Scout Section Leader



Socially distanced scouting in action!

Looking ahead to 2021/22!

Writing this in June 2021, we are optimistic that the new scouting year will feel a little more 'normal' than the year we've just had.

We are looking forward to welcoming new beavers, wishing our existing older beavers well as they swim up to cubs, and encouraging our older cubs as they embrace the more challenging world of scouts.

As always we are looking for new adult leaders to help us to keep everything running smoothly. We would love to re-open our Wednesday scout group but until we get some adult leaders who are willing to take this on, we will need to run with only one scout group. Demand for places at beavers has picked up as lock down has ended. We are currently trying to manage numbers with an eye to ensuring that all of our beavers will have a place in cubs and scouts – but this may mean we cannot taken on as many new members as we would like.

It doesn't take a huge amount of your time, and one benefit of the last year is that the groups in each section are now all working really well to ensure joint planning and preparation for sessions, which helps to share the workload and reduce the commitment needed from any one person.

If you think you could help us out – even once or twice a month – please get in touch with Michele at gsl@towcesterscouts.org.uk or with one of your section leaders.

Meanwhile, we look forward to a summer of face to face activities and a new scouting year full of promise and opportunity!



Our advent calendar windows as a Christmas card 202



Scouts

1st Towcester

1ST TOWCESTER SCOUT GROUP – 304415

ACCOUNTS

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31ST MARCH 2021

Essendon Accounts and Tax Limited
3 Warren Yard
Warren Park
Stratford Road
Milton Keynes
MK12 5NW

1ST TOWCESTER SCOUT GROUP – 304415

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INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S REPORT
TO THE TRUSTEES OF THE
1ST TOWCESTER SCOUT GROUP – 304415

I report on the accounts of the 1st Towcester Scout Group for the year ended 31st March 2021 which are set out on pages 2 to 3.

Respective responsibilities of trustees and examiner

The charity's trustees are responsible for the preparation of the accounts. The charity's trustees consider that an audit is not required for this year under section 144(2) of the Charities Act 2011 and that an independent examination is needed.

It is my responsibility to:

- examine the accounts (under section 145 of the 2011 Act);
- follow the procedures laid down in the General Directions given by the Charity Commissioners (under section 145(5)(b) of the 2011 Act); and
- state whether particular matters have come to my attention.

Basis of examiner's report

My examination was carried out in accordance with the General Directions given by the Charity Commissioners. An examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the charity and a comparison of the accounts presented with those records. It also includes consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts, and seeking explanations from you as trustees concerning any such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in an audit, and consequently I do not express an audit opinion on the view given by the accounts.

Independent Examiner's statement

In connection with my examination, no matter has come to my attention:

1 which gives me reasonable cause to believe that in any material respect the requirements

- to keep accounting records in accordance with section 130 of the 2011 Act; and
- to prepare accounts which accord with the accounting records and to comply with the accounting requirements of the 2011 Act

have not been met; or

2 to which, in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.



Matthew Brown FCCA
For and on behalf of Essendon Accounts and Tax Limited
3 Warren Yard
Warren Park
Stratford Road
Milton Keynes MK12 5NW

Date: 16/07/21

1st Towcester Scout Group - 304415
Receipts and Payments Account
For The Year Ended 31st March 2021

GENERAL FUNDS	2021		2020	
	£	£	£	£
RECEIPTS				
<i>Donations, legacies and other similar receipts</i>				
Capitation			-	
Subscriptions	1,224		9,892	
Donations	-		383	
Grants	19,669		-	
Gift aid	527		691	
		21,420		10,965
<i>Operating activities to further charity's objects</i>				
Group events	79		196	
Hall hire	81		426	
PreSchool	1,975		5,435	
Camps	230		3,839	
Misc income	2,474		555	
		4,839		10,451
<i>Operating activities to generate funds</i>				
Fundraising	1,004		433	
		1,004		433
<i>Investment income receipts</i>				
Bank interest		15		46
		27,278		21,895
Total receipts		<u>27,278</u>		<u>21,895</u>
PAYMENTS				
<i>Payments for generating funds</i>				
Fundraising		-		-
<i>Charitable Payments</i>				
Capitation	3,572		4,257	
Donation	50		150	
<i>Charitable activities</i>				
Group events	283		2,892	
Camps	390		6,127	
Equipment	151		155	
Uniforms	-		52	
Fundraising (group)	-		20	
Badges	347		951	
Subscriptions	43		155	
		4,836		14,759
<i>Governance costs</i>				
Scout hall running costs	5,059		2,998	
Electricity	1,930		2,471	
Water rates	702		366	
Insurance	1,486		1,449	
Telephone	226		546	
Misc	209		77	
		9,611		7,907
<i>Management and administration</i>				
Accountancy	300		300	
Bank Fees	69		60	
		369		360
		<u>14,816</u>		<u>23,026</u>
Net of receipts/(Payments)		12,462		(1,131)
Cash funds last year end		31,372		32,503
Cash funds this year end		<u>43,834</u>		<u>31,372</u>

1st Towcester Scout Group - 304415
Statement of Assets and Liabilities
For The Year Ended 31st March 2021

	2021		2020	
	£	£	£	£
<u>Monetary Assets</u>				
General Funds				
CAF current account	1,124		1,653	
CAF reserves	40,298		28,283	
CAF special purposes	2,348		1,345	
Cash	<u>64</u>		<u>90</u>	
		43,834		31,372
		<u><u>43,834</u></u>		<u><u>31,372</u></u>
 <u>Funds</u>				
Restricted		-		-
Unrestricted		43,834		31,372
		<u><u>43,834</u></u>		<u><u>31,372</u></u>
 <u>Non-Monetary Assets</u>				
Scout hut - at cost		150,000		150,000

Signed on behalf of the trustees



Date 16 07 '21

1ST TOWCESTER SCOUT GROUP – 304415

ACCOUNTS

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31ST MARCH 2021

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Matthew Brown FCCA
For and on behalf of Essendon Accounts and Tax Limited
3 Warren Yard
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Date: 16/07/21

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For The Year Ended 31st March 2021

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Capitation	3,572		4,257	
Donation	50		150	
<i>Charitable activities</i>				
Group events	283		2,892	
Camps	390		6,127	
Equipment	151		155	
Uniforms	-		52	
Fundraising (group)	-		20	
Badges	347		951	
Subscriptions	43		155	
		4,836		14,759
<i>Governance costs</i>				
Scout hall running costs	5,059		2,998	
Electricity	1,930		2,471	
Water rates	702		366	
Insurance	1,486		1,449	
Telephone	226		546	
Misc	209		77	
		9,611		7,907
<i>Management and administration</i>				
Accountancy	300		300	
Bank Fees	69		60	
		369		360
		<u>14,816</u>		<u>23,026</u>
Net of receipts/(Payments)		12,462		(1,131)
Cash funds last year end		31,372		32,503
Cash funds this year end		<u>43,834</u>		<u>31,372</u>

1st Towcester Scout Group - 304415
Statement of Assets and Liabilities
For The Year Ended 31st March 2021

	2021		2020	
	£	£	£	£
<u>Monetary Assets</u>				
General Funds				
CAF current account	1,124		1,653	
CAF reserves	40,298		28,283	
CAF special purposes	2,348		1,345	
Cash	<u>64</u>		<u>90</u>	
		43,834		31,372
		<u><u>43,834</u></u>		<u><u>31,372</u></u>
 <u>Funds</u>				
Restricted		-		-
Unrestricted		43,834		31,372
		<u><u>43,834</u></u>		<u><u>31,372</u></u>
 <u>Non-Monetary Assets</u>				
Scout hut - at cost		150,000		150,000

Signed on behalf of the trustees



Date 16 07 '21

