

SOUTH WEST CHESHIRE DISTRICT SCOUT COUNCIL

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

APRIL 11TH 2025

AGENDA

Annual General Meeting

South West Cheshire Scout Council

April 11th 2025

- 1 Welcome by the District Lead Volunteer Dan Baldwin
- 2 Apologies for absence
- 3 Governance Matters
 - a. Approve the minutes of AGM held on 12 April 2024
 - b. Re Adopt the model constitution from POR
 - c. Note the District's financial year (January 1st 2024 to 31st December 2024)
 - d. Agree the number of members that may be appointed to the Trustee Board
 - e. Agree the quorum for any future meetings of future meetings of the District Scout Council (excluding this AGM)
- 4 Membership of the District Trustees Board
 - a Appointment of the Chair
 - b Appointment of other members of the trustee's board
- 5 Appointment of the Auditor
- 6 Election of two Members of the District Scout Council for nomination to the County Scout Council
- 7 Approval of the 2024 Annual Report of the District Trustees and the Financial Accounts for the year ending 31st December 2024
- 8 Explorer Scouts Presentation
- 9 The District Lead Volunteer report for 2024
- 10 The County Lead Volunteer
- 11 Awards

DISTRICT OFFICERS 2024

<p>Life President Mr P F Taylor</p> <p>President Vacant</p> <p>Vice Presidents Mr P Kent,</p> <p>Office Holders Chairperson Mrs J Smart Treasurer Mr R Bennett</p> <p>District Trustee Board Chairperson Treasurer District Lead Volunteer Ms D Blurton Ms L Grasmeder Ms I Shaw Mr T Austin Mr J Barlow Mr J Bennett Mr D Brough Mr J Ellam Mr M Rowe</p> <p>Co Opted Member Mr C Shore Mr A Whalley</p>	<p>District Lead Volunteer Mr D Baldwin</p> <p>Team Leader Programme Mr C Shore</p> <p>Team Leader 14 to 24 years Mr T Austin</p> <p>Youth Team Leader Mr R Ashley</p> <p>Team Leader Network Mr J Whalley</p> <p>Team Leader Activities Rob Galloway</p> <p>Team Leader Volunteer Development Mr T Owen</p> <p>District Chaplain Vacant</p> <p>Registered Charity No: 506895 Scout Association Registered No: 10808</p>
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South West Cheshire District Scout Council

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting Held on 12th April 2024 Nantwich Civic Hall

1.0 Welcome

The outgoing District Commissioner, Ian Potts, took the Chair. There were 48 members and 3 guests present.

Ian opened the meeting by welcoming all those present, including the county Lead Volunteer Dave Hopley, Val Thomason, and Graham Phillips. Ian then welcomed the new District Volunteer Dan Baldwin. In particular Ian welcomed our Life President Peter Taylor who had celebrated his 100th birthday the day before the AGM, he was accompanied by his wife Peg who was due to celebrate her century later in the year.

At this point Dane Chaplow took the chair for the remainder of the meeting.

2.0 Apologies

Apologies had been received from Katrina and Stephanie Fearn, Donna and Andy Whalley, Roy Chetwood, Gill Evanson, Greta Piasecka, Dawn Davies, Teresa Shaw

3.0 Governance Matters

3.1 Minutes of AGM held on 12th March 2023

Proposed, seconded and accepted as a true record.

3.2 Re Adopt the Model Constitution from POR

At this time the current constitution was readopted but it was noted that a much changed POR is to be introduced later in 2024 and as a consequence the constitution will be amended and submitted to the Group Council at the next AGM for ratification.

3.3 Note the District's Financial year.

Noted that this is January 1st to December 31st

3.4 Agree the Numbers of Members to be appointed to the Trustees Board

Agreed that this would total 12.

3.5 Agree the Quorum for any Future Meetings of the Group Scout Council

This was set at 20.

4.0 Membership of the District Trustees Board

4.1 Appointment of the Chair

Dan announced that the new chair would be Mrs Jane Smart. In doing so he thanked Dane for all his work as District Chair over a number of years. Dane continued to chair the meeting to its conclusion.

4.2 Appointment of Other Trustees

This AGM was being held almost immediately after the new processes for the Trustee Board were introduced and there had not been time to advertise posts and conduct elections. It was agreed that the following would serve as trustees until April 2025 when a full election would take place:

Dan Baldwin	DLV
Jane Smart	Chair
Richard Bennett	Treasurer
Tom Austin	18/25 rep
Diane Blurton	
Ingrid Shaw	
Jake Ellam	
Mark Rowe	
Jamie Barlow	
David Brough	
John Bennett	Secretary
Carl Shore	Co Opted (Camp Site)
Andrew Whalley	Co Opted (Scout Shop)

5.0 Appointment of the Auditor

Will continue to be David Taylor, an accountant from Middlewich.

6.0 Election of two Members of the District Scout Council for Nomination to the County Scout Council.

Reece Ashley and Jack Whalley volunteered to take this on, there being no other nominations both were elected.

7.0 Approval of the 2024 Annual Report of the District Trustees Board and the Financial Accounts for the year ending 31st December 2024.

The annual report had been previously circulated and was also displayed on the screen.

Dane went through the report, no questions were raised and Dane thanked the contributors for a report detailing an excellent years scouting in SWC The report was proposed, seconded and approved.

The Annual Accounts were then displayed on the screen and Richard Bennett went through them in details, no questions were asked. Dane thanked Richard for another excellent set of accounts.

The meeting approved both the annual report and the Financial Report.

8.0 World Scout Jamboree 23

Emily Taylor and Ellie Woodcock gave an excellent audio/visual presentation of their experiences at WSJ23 in South Korea. They were thanked for an excellent presentation about an experience they will never forget.

9.0 The District Lead Volunteer

Ian Potts gave his report on his final year in office;

Looking back on what I said at last years AGM many of the same themes still applied in 2023. There have been challenges but also lots of achievements to look back on with pride. Obviously the World Scout Jamboree was, as we have just heard, one of the highlights of the year with seven of our young people and 2 leaders attending along with a number of adults providing support in various roles at the event. We also had 5 people take part in the County run Explorer Belt Expedition.

The District Camp at the end of April was attended by well over half of the young people in the District. It took a similar format to previous years with a wide variety of activities and lots of opportunities for Beavers, Cubs, Scouts and Explorers from across the District to interact with each other. On the whole the weather was reasonably kind, the few showers not dampening enthusiasm or spoiling the enjoyment. I'd like to thank Tice and Carl, and their team, for their hard work over several months to put on the camp.

The District continues to provide a wide variety of adventurous activities, from climbing and kayaking to hillwalking and shooting. We have a good team of permit holders, both at group and District level but could always do with more to meet the demand for these activities.

The numbers of young people involved in Scouting across the District fell slightly in 2023, due mainly to one group suspending meetings after a number of adult volunteers left. Work has been going on over the last few months to recruit new volunteers and restart the meetings later this year. For much of the year some of the District Team were running meetings at another group while new volunteers were sought and I would like to thank them for their support. Unfortunately, too few volunteers were found so places were found for the young people at other local groups. The District team continue to actively support groups where we can.

Safe Scouting remains a priority which is why there will be a continued focus on ensuring that every volunteer has up to date Safety and Safeguarding training. While there are currently too many adults who have not completed them this is going to be a focus in the coming weeks.

We have a lot of very dedicated volunteers in our District and a number of them reached some significant milestones in the last 12 months. These are shown in the Annual Report but I want to mention a special award that was presented earlier this

year. In the King's Birthday Honours, John Bennett was awarded the MBE for services to young people in Cheshire. This was for his work in Scouting over many years and I would like you to join me in congratulating him on his well-deserved award.

Finally, I would like to thank each and every adult who supports Scouting in South West Cheshire for all that they do.

Before I hand over to Dan to say a few words I would just like to say a huge thank you to everyone who has worked with me over the last 10 years. I can honestly say I have enjoyed leading this District through the many highlights and few challenges and have learnt a huge amount. Most of all I want to thank my wife for supporting me throughout, hopefully she will be seeing a bit more of me now.

I usually finish with a quote from BP but this year I will just finish by saying in response to one of his quotes, I did my best.

Dan spoke very briefly to the meeting to introduce himself and to say how excited he was to stepping into the role of District Lead Volunteer.

10.0 The County Lead Volunteer

Dave began by thanking Ian for all his hard work over the last ten years and he went on to thank Stephanie for the support she had given Ian.

He then went on to talk about the previous twelve months Scouting in the County. He used a series of slides to highlight "Celebrating Success" In particular he mentioned:

- Awarded Charity of the Year 2023
- Sell-out Cheshire Hike
- 275 Cubs slept under the GAIA
- Skills Day for 120 Young Leaders
- First King's Scouts on Parade at Windsor
- 560 Scouts & Explorers achieved Top Awards (including 60 Explorer Belts, 130 YouShape)
- A different World Scout Jamboree
- Community Impact Days at Tatton Park
- King's Coronation and Big Help Out.

He then mentioned the changes coming about as a result of the Transformation Project.

Finally he thanked Dane and Ian (again) along with Emily and Ellie.

11.0 Awards

A number of awards were presented to groups and then a presentation was made to Ian and Stephanie to thank them for their service

The evening concluded with a very special presentation to the District Life President and Peter Taylor his wife Peggy.

Peter spoke to the meeting with a look back on his life and in particular scouting. This speech was received with a standing ovation and concluded the evening.

Dane closed the meeting at 21.25.

John Bennett

District Secretary, South West Cheshire Scouts. June 2024

ANNUAL REPORT 2024

This year's report has a slightly different layout to those in the past. This reflects the changes to the district teams as a consequence of the Transformation Project. The report has three sections Support Team, Programme Team and Volunteer Development Team.

TRUSTEE BOARD

District Secretary's Report

The District Trustee Board met on four occasions in 2024, using the facilities at 35th SWC and 17th SWC due to the ongoing accessibility issues at District HQ. Work continues on the refurbishment of District HQ, the priority is to replace the staircase and then to rewire the building. This is work in progress.

Submission of the annual census return was completed on time. The submission of the district accounts and annual report to the Charity Commission was also completed on schedule.

The Trustees were pleased to note the number of awards presented during 2024 in South West Cheshire.

Member of the British Empire

Michael Bennion

Silver Wolf

John Bennett MBE

Bar to the Silver Acorn

Graham Shaw

Silver Acorn

Andrew Whalley

Jen Wilkinson

The Award for Merit`

Alex Smith

Chris Wood

Andrew Edwards

Stephanie Potts

Chief Scouts Commendation for Good Service

Jill Taylor
Cathie Wainwright
Melanie Braviner
Matthew Griffiths
Dan O'Driscoll
Aaron Baxter

Long Service Awards

Chief Scout's 30 years Service Award

Jen Wilkinson
Donna Whalley
Frank Woodall

Chief Scout's 25 years Service Award

Robert Cave

Chief Scout's 20 years Service Award

Stephanie Potts
Matt Warren
Christopher Booth
Andrew Fairclough

Kings Scout Awards

Tom Austin
Harriet Faulkner
Lucy Landolt

Youth Awards

108 Chief Scouts Bronze Awards
87 Chief Scouts Silver Awards
55 Chief Scouts Gold Awards
15 Chief Scouts Platinum Awards
18 Young Leader Belt Buckles



It is with great sadness that we record the deaths, since the last District AGM, of former leaders and supporters of Scouting in South West Cheshire:

Geoff Whiston Ray Stafford Robin Christian
 Brian Jones Bill Elliott Kevin Duckett
 Paul Spencer Ray Salisbury

CENSUS RETURN COMPARISON

	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Groups	23	22	22	22	21	20
Squirrels						33
Beaver	385	255	313	336	343	331
Cub	301	346	346	344	362	357
Scout	422	371	344	363	333	328
Explorer*	138	120	122	123	134	150
Network	102	90	25	10	6	2
Adults	612	513	505	341	418	396
Total	2089	1978	1578	1476	1596	1544

*The Explorer figure includes members of the Explorer Young Leader Unit

John Bennett
District Secretary

DISTRICT LEADERSHIP TEAM

District Lead Volunteer

Since taking on this role last April, I've had the privilege of engaging with numerous volunteers and young people across South West Cheshire through meetings, events, and visits to Groups.

As you'll see when you read through the various reports from around the District, 2024 has been a year of growth, challenges, and fantastic achievements. Some personal highlights of the year included our Chief Scout's Bronze Award presentations at Milldale, watching our outstanding 2024 Gang Show, attending the District Cub Camp in September, and seeing 88 Scouts and Explorers from South West Cheshire recognised for achieving their Top Awards at the 'Celebrating Success' event in November. These experiences have been humbling and inspiring, showcasing the immense dedication of our volunteers right across the District.

As part of the Scouts' "Transforming the Volunteer Experience" project, 2024 saw the structure of the District Team evolve considerably, and as a result we've been able to welcome a significant number of new Team members. I'm very grateful to all those who have offered their help and support as part of the new team structure and looking forward to seeing what we can achieve together in 2025 and beyond.

I know at times Scouts can ask a lot of us, so I'd just like to say a heartfelt thank you to our exceptional volunteers in South West Cheshire for their outstanding commitment to delivering the programme and keeping our young people safe.

Dan Baldwin

District Lead Volunteer

Safety

The Coroners inquest into the tragic death of an Explorer Scout, from Greater Manchester, whilst on the Great Orme during a Scouting activity was finally concluded in 2024. HM Coroner was very critical of the Scout Association and this has had a dramatic impact on everything we do. A new Safety training module which has been put together with assistance from outside bodies and was introduced in late 2024. Every leader within the movement must have completed this new mandatory module by July 2025 and it is renewable every three years.

Also following on from the Coroner's report I have started to produce a quarterly digest on all reportable incidents and near misses in the district, to be shared with every adult involved in Scouting in SWC. The details are anonymised, the aim being to share information as a learning process and not to point the finger. This has been well received around the County as well as SWC and from Q1 2025 it now includes all reportable incidents and near misses in Cheshire.

Safety must be a standing agenda item on all trustees and leaders meeting.

John Bennett
District Safety Lead

SUPPORT TEAM

Scout Shop

The Scout Shop had another good year in 2024, thanks to the fantastic team of dedicated Scouts and Guides volunteers who help to run and staff it. In a world where people increasingly turn to online retailers, I'm proud that we can keep running the shop. It continues to be a valuable source of advice for parents bringing their children to Scouts for the first time, helping them to purchase the right uniform in the right sizes and providing great customer service.

Turnover has been reasonably consistent over recent years, and was slightly up in 2024 over 2023. In part this is due to rising prices of our biggest selling items (uniform and badges) rather than seeing significantly more footfall through the shop.

Margin on the items sold in the shop was under pressure in 2024, particularly due to a mid-year increase in shipping costs on our purchases from Scout Stores who are the sole supplier for all Scouts uniform and badges across the UK. This looks set to continue in 2025, with the wholesale discount for uniform purchases being reduced. This will be partially offset by a greater discount on our badge purchases, but we'll need to keep a close eye on the impact as 2025 unfolds. The shop makes a vital contribution to District finances, so any reduction in margins may ultimately lead to the District Levy needing to be increased, or alternative sources of fundraising being identified.

Dan Baldwin
District Lead Volunteer

Milldale Campsite Report 2024

Milldale continues to be a popular location for daytime and evening visits within the district, with overnight numbers now growing. In 2024, the site welcomed **1,270 day visitors**, **3,053 evening visitors**, and **1,258 individuals camping**.

945 individuals camped from outside the district, representing a **40% increase** compared to 2023, when there were 673 out-of-district campers. In contrast, **313 individuals** from within South West Cheshire camped at the site, an increase of **47%** from the 213 recorded in 2023. These figures highlight the ongoing growth of Milldale's popularity and the importance of encouraging even greater participation from within the district.

Financial Position

The campsite remains financially sound, maintaining a positive cash flow throughout the year. This has enabled continued reinvestment into the site and its facilities. At the end of 2024, there were approximately **76 outstanding invoices**, with an estimated total value of **around £4,000**. These are all from in-district bookings and are difficult to finalise due to some bookings lacking confirmed participant numbers.

To address this, a new internal process has been introduced for 2025, including the addition of a dedicated team member responsible for chasing invoices and confirming final numbers. The Treasurer will continue working on closing off 2024 invoices in the coming month.

Activities and Site Usage

Activity participation remained steady throughout 2024:

- **248 individuals** took part in Archery (compared to 246 in 2023, showing little change)
- **236 individuals** engaged in Climbing (compared to 229 in 2023, again showing a consistent level of participation)

We successfully delivered our **third Mini-Mudder** event for Cubs and Scouts, which continues to be a highlight in the campsite calendar. In addition, several **instructor training courses** were held for Archery, Shooting, and Crossbow. These courses were extremely popular, particularly among leaders from out-of-district groups.

However, we are facing challenges due to a shortage of qualified activity leaders. This has led us to pause evening sessions and instead focus on designated activity days, where groups can pre-book specific sessions. Permit availability is also becoming a concern, as a small number of leaders currently hold the required qualifications to run these activities.

Site Maintenance and Improvements

This year, the team made a significant effort to manage the Himalayan Balsam problem. The invasive plant has been difficult to control since the site went unused during the COVID-19 pandemic, and chemical treatments are not an option. Manual removal remains challenging, but the team has cleared large areas of brambles and branches that had been hampering progress. In addition, the site has now invested in a new **flail machine** that will help cut back the balsam before it can seed.

The site also had to respond to numerous storms this year, which brought down several trees mostly willow and cherry. Managing this damage has required substantial time and effort from the team.

We have a small team of volunteers who continue to support the site on weekends and weekdays with general maintenance and site improvements. Their contribution is invaluable in keeping the site in the excellent condition you see today.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all members of the campsite team and every volunteer who has helped maintain and run the site over the past year.

If you are interested in getting involved, please speak to me or a member of the campsite committee. There is always a warm welcome and a biscuit or two waiting for you.

Carl Shore

Milldale Campsite Chairman

PROGRAMME TEAM REPORT 2024

I began my role as Programme Team Leader in November and have started to make progress in implementing the new structure for the Programme Team. For those unfamiliar, the Programme Team consists of the following sub-teams:

- **Section Support Sub-Team** (formerly ADC - Beavers, Cubs & Scouts)
- **Adventurous Activities**
- **Stage Performances**
- **Nights Away**
- **International Events Organising Team**
- **Top Awards**

Each of these sub-teams plays a crucial role in supporting and enhancing the Scouting experience across the District.

Section Support Sub-Team

The Section Support Sub-Team operates differently from the previous ADC structure. Instead of visiting and working with a single section within a group, each Section Support member now supports all sections within a designated group. This reduces travel across the District, allowing members to build stronger connections with the sections they support. This approach also improves the support for transition between sections and enhances overall group support. Each Section Support member retains their specialist role (Squirrels, Beavers, Cubs, or Scouts) and remains available for any specialist queries.

Section Support Team Members

- **Chris Wood** (12th, 14th, 28th, 22nd, 41st)
- **Jamie Barlow** (3rd, 35th, 18th, WH, 1st)
- **Neil Tomlinson** (16th, 25th, 26th, 38th)
- **Pending Appointment** (16th, 23rd, 39th, 17th, 40th)

The team's initial goal is to have visited every group section by Easter to assess areas requiring support. This will help ensure we deliver a safe and balanced programme that provides every young person with the opportunity to attain top awards. Once this feedback has been gathered, the team will develop a comprehensive district programme to support groups delivering the programme.

Nights Away

Across the District, the number of nights away remains lower than pre-COVID levels. A significant barrier to participation is the lack of permitted leaders, with some groups having no permit holders at all.

The Nights Away Team, led by Ingrid Shaw now includes four Nights Away Assessors and three additional leaders are currently in training to attain their Nights Away Assessor permits. This strengthens the team's capacity to support leaders in obtaining

their permits and assist groups without permit holders in delivering nights away experiences. The team has also begun planning for an international camp in 2027.

I have included some section reports below from the old structure as a number of activities took place before the new structure was introduced. I would like to take the opportunity to thank everyone who has directly supported me, as well as all the volunteers who have and continue to deliver some of the best Scouting opportunities in the country.

Stage Performances

A hugely successful Gang Show took place at the Lyceum Theatre in April/May 2024, the show involved a cast of some 80 young people supported by a few adults. The show was very well received and financially successful.

Now, Craig Chaplow (Producer), Graham Proctor (Creative Director), and Dave Brough (Technical Director) are leading the Stage Performance Sub-Team to deliver a spectacular Gang Show for 2026.

The team is actively finalising some key changes to ensure the show's future success. The plan and scripts are ready to go, and the team will kick off visits in the autumn to recruit budding actors, singers, comedians, and dancers from across the District to participate in the show. Will you be the next star of the show?

Event Organising Team

The team has been focusing on preparing for District Camp, which is planned for May 2025. Planning is well on track, with 35 activities planned with 600 Squirrels, Beavers, Cubs, Scouts, and Explorers booked

Carl Shore, Programme Team Leader

SECTION REPORTS

The District had an incredibly active year for Sectional events, offering camping, climbing, water sports, shooting, the Swympic event, Mini Mudder and a whole host of other activities. A special thanks must go to all leaders and volunteers who supported these events.

Award Successes

In 2024, we recognised the success of those Beavers who had achieved their Chief Scout's Bronze Awards in 2023 with a presentation of certificates and BBQ, held at Milldale on a lovely sunny evening in May.

70 Cubs received their Chief Scout's Silver Award certificates at a ceremony held at St Thomas More High School. Cubs from the following groups received awards: WH 1st, 3rd, 7th, 12th, 14th, 15th, 16th, 17th, 22nd, 23rd, 26th, 28th, 35th R, 35th S, 38th,

39th, and 41st. This marks a 10-award increase from the 2023 event —a fantastic achievement.

50 of our Scouts achieved their Chief Scout Gold Award, with 8 Scout YouShape awards also achieved. The recipients were put forward to attend the County's Celebrating Success event at Parr Hall, Warrington.

Squirrels Go Nuts!

We were delighted to be able to open our first two Squirrel Dreys in 2024, with the 3rd SWC starting up early in the year, followed by the 14th SWC's Drey in September. In September, the 3rd joined Squirrels from across Cheshire at Tatton Park for the County's first ever Squirrel Event, "Squirrels Go Nuts!"

District Beaver Challenge

The District Beaver Challenge held in early 2024 saw entries from a number of Beaver Colonies from around the District, with the event ultimately won on this occasion by the 16th SWC.

Beaver and Cub County Funday

As a District, we took 201 Beavers, Cubs, and leaders to the County Funday at Forest Camp. Activities included climbing, caving, branding, slacklining, shooting, and fencing. Thanks to the District Trustees for their financial support, which covered transport costs and ensured more Cubs could participate.

District Cubs Craft Competition

The district craft competition was hosted by 17th SWC. Cubs showcased their creativity by designing models of their ideal town centre. Nine teams participated, with the 41st emerging as the worthy winners.

Cub and Scout Mini Mudder at Milldale

Cubs and Scouts attended the Mini Mudder, organised by the campsite team. Everyone thoroughly enjoyed the event, with many looking forward to the next one.

District Cub Camp – Back to Basics

Held at the end of September, despite initial concerns about the weather, the camp proceeded successfully. Activities included backwoods cooking, tie-dye, pioneering, branding, pond dipping, mini raft building, plaster cast tracking, orienteering, and tree identification. The event concluded with a campfire on Saturday and an athletics badge session on Sunday.

Cubs Christmas Party

On 1st December, Cubs celebrated Christmas at the Lifestyle Centre with games, activities, and a visit from Santa, who provided gifts for all. A huge thank you to all the leaders who made this event a success.

Looking ahead to 2025, we have an exciting programme planned, including the Craft Competition, District Camp, Sports Day, and the Christmas party.

Cheshire Hike

A calendar change due to wet weather in the Spring meant Cheshire Hike happened in September of 2024 rather than April. District was represented by 20 teams from 6 Groups and 3 ESUs. A special mention must go to the Pathfinder+ team from the 16th SWC who won the overall County prize for the age group.

Future Plans

Under our new structure, the Programme Team aims to host regular opportunities for Leaders from all Sections to network with one another and input on how the district supports Squirrel, Beaver, Cub and Scout sections.

There's also a healthy pipeline of Programme events in the planning for 2025 and 2026. Some plans so far include:

- District Camp (May 2025)
- Mini Mudder
- District Scouts First Aid Competition
- Chief Scout Gold Award BBQ at Milldale
- Christmas Events
- A District Scout Camp (2026)
- District Cheshire Hike Training Programme (for the 2026 event)

Any input and suggestions for additional initiatives are welcomed.

Neil Tomlinson & Chris Wood, Programme Team Members

14-24 Team Report

2024 saw the change into the new structure, with myself taking over as 14-24 Team Leader from November. I am excited by the change, with hopefully lots of exciting developments to come in 2025. I would also like to take the moment to thank and recognise the work of Ingrid as DESC over the last 10 years within the district. The job is made easier to the situation you walk into, down to her hard work previously.

Explorer Section

All 4 Explorer units hold regular weekly meeting in their respective partnership venues and are very well attended. A number of Explorers are taking the opportunity to attend more than one meeting night, with every unit meeting on a different night of the week. The programmes continue to be well planned and delivered by the leadership teams, with the majority of units offered at least one camping experience within the last 12 months. The Explorer section has also shown growth in membership in the annual census reporting figures.

The challenge however, continues to be leadership. Drake are currently well situated, and Shipton also have good support to reflect current membership being the largest unit in the district. Mallory & Fiennes have seen membership numbers grow over the

last year, which has but additional strain on the smaller leadership teams. We are looking to see if anyone is able to support these units, in particular a Team Leader for Fiennes. Thanks to all the leaders for their continued dedication to Explorers this last 12 months.

Finances continue to be a tight situation for many units. This hopefully ease as we go into 2025, with online payments now set up for subs and events through OSM. Thanks to Cathie for all of her hard work in this area. In addition, Sum Up card readers have also been purchased to assist units with their fundraising.

Young Leaders

The Young Leader unit has once again proved to be very successful, with two full sets of B-K modules run across the year. Module K continues to be the most popular with places filled quickly. Four module A courses have also been run, which demonstrates the popularity of the section.

Membership stands at 83 across the district, 53 of which are not attending another Explorer unit. 15/19 groups within the district currently have at least one young leader. Thanks to Di, Gaynor and all the able assistants who have supported the running of the provision within 2024.

Network

After a hiatus, the SWC Network section has been relaunched to steady success. We have 19 active members, with our first night in December at Crewe Tenpin bowling bringing 16 Network members for a night of information, fun, and ideas of what each member is looking to get from the Section.

A varied and interesting programme is being planned, full of potential camps, activities and days out, as well as chances for Network to become more visible through co-running a District Explorer Scouts sports day in the summer is planned for 2025, and including the sections own necker. Hopefully with a continued drive within the district and consistent nights being run through the spring and summer we can grow the numbers even more looking into the future.

Top Awards

From a Top Award perspective, the district was very well represented at the County Celebrating Success event again, with 11 Chief Scout Platinum Awards, 2 Explorer YouShape and 17 Young Leader Belt Buckles. This is one area we are really looking to target for growth over the next 12 months, following the appointments of Abi Woodcock & Alistair Williams to Top Awards & DofE coordinators, respectively.

Youth Forum

Over the last 12 months, we have held 3 District Youth Forums. These included full day forums; designing 'Outdoors In 24 activities' for the district, as well as half day

forums where we looked at how we can celebrate top awards in the district. We also had a sociable 'big breakfast' in the sunshine over the spring.

The numbers at the forum have continued to grow, with 39 members now part of the forum. What has been particularly pleasing, is the growth of Scout representatives staying on as Explorer ones as they move up the sections. This has however, left the forum rather Explorer heavy so we are looking for more Scout voices to join from a greater range of groups.

As a district, we have also attended both County Youth Forums held in February & November, including bringing representatives aged 14-18 & 18-24. In addition, the district were also key members of the Youth Forum contingent, helping to support the Cheshire Scouts Cub & Beaver fundays in July.

Through the District Youth Forums, we have pushed the YouShape Award with attendees, giving examples and ideas of how they can go back into their own sections and gain the award collectively. Which was pleasing to see at Celebrating Success, that the district was one of the highest in the number of YouShape Awards presented, with 10 in total.

Looking ahead to the next year, the Youth Forum will have a pivotal role in helping plan and deliver our next District Camp. From the theme, activity bases and the wide game on the Friday night, there will be a chance to really get their voices heard. At the end of 2024 we also appointed Reece Ashley as the next District Youth Lead for South West Cheshire. Over the first three months of the year, we will start the handover process to ensure all the work carried out to date continues.

So with that, I sign off as District Youth Lead. The role has been incredibly rewarding. Seeing the growth and impact the Youth Forum now has, compared to three years ago is fantastic. I'd like to take the opportunity to thank those who have supported me in the role over the years, especially those who gave support so the forums could run. And of course, I wish Reece and his team all the best as we hand over the baton.

Tom Austin
14-24 Team Leader

Adventurous Activities

Kayaking

- Permit training weekend (May) – 3 Young Leaders gained Leadership Permits.
- Taster weekend (May) – 70 Scouts participated in six sessions.
- Three Paddlesport Training Courses – 23 Scouts achieved Stage 2, and 7 achieved Stage 3.

Bell-Boating

- First district bell-boating taster day held at Tatton Activity Centre.
- One permit holder in place, with plans to expand in 2025.

Climbing

- Limited availability in 2024 due to instructor shortages.
- Abseiling wall repairs completed, allowing an Autumn half-term badge course.

Hill-Walking

- October half-term district walk to Moel Famau.
- Encouraging leaders to obtain Terrain 1 permits.

A huge thanks to all volunteers and permit holders for their dedication. Our volunteers have given at least 500 hours to support the 2024 kayak programme alone. I am extremely grateful. Additionally, our Adventurous Activities volunteers have worked tirelessly across multiple disciplines, ensuring that young people in the district experience a wide variety of outdoor challenges. Their time, expertise, and enthusiasm have been instrumental in making this a successful year for adventure in Scouting.

Rob Galloway, Team Leader (Activities Sub-Team)

Other Activities

Shooting Team

The district shooting team had a hectic and highly successful year, with over 1,000 participants engaging in rifle, pistol, or crossbow activities.

Shooting sessions were held each month at Milldale, with 44 different activities taking place throughout the year. Most months included one district session open to all members over 10 years old, alongside four taster sessions for various groups within SWC and other districts.

To support leader training, the team organised eight training courses to enable leaders to run shooting and crossbow events for Scouts.

Competitions and Achievements

The Waterloo Shooting Competition & Camp (June 9 -11) was a major success, with 368 participants. With no in-person national competition in 2024, this was likely the UK's largest participation event.

The team supported the National Intercounty Competition at Aldersley in May, where 80% of Cheshire's squad came from our district. Cheshire secured gold medals in all team categories and individual pistol, rifle, and overall class. At Scout Shoot (September) in Bisley, Surrey, SWC Scouts secured 13 medals.

The Cheshire Inter-District Competition saw SWC win for the second consecutive year, maintaining top placements at district, county, and national levels. Although the Scout National Competition was not held in person due to changes at the Lord Roberts

Centre, SWC had strong representation in the postal competition, with 10 Scouts securing medals in various categories.

Challenges and Future Outlook

Despite these achievements, attendance at district Saturday sessions remains low, with most Waterloo competitors coming from outside the district.

Instructor and helper availability remains a concern, with volunteers being overstretched. The team is now adapting the programme to a more sustainable format, which may impact activity levels and future competitive success. We are always in need of additional adult volunteers. If you are interested in helping, even on a small scale, please reach out to the team.

Sailing Team

Sailing remains a popular activity within the district, with almost 100 Scouts, Cubs, and Explorer Young Leaders taking part in the sailing taster sessions on 22nd June. This event showcased Scouting at its best, with participants gaining valuable experience on the water.

Another 90 young people, including many Beavers and Cubs, joined the session on 6th July. For over 50 of them, it was their first time in a sailing boat, making it a fantastic introduction to the sport. Despite challenging conditions, all participants embraced the experience, demonstrating resilience and enthusiasm.

A huge thanks goes to Winsford Flash Sailing Club for organising and running these successful events. We are also grateful to the cadets, junior and adult members, and their families, as well as our own Scouts, for their involvement and dedication in making these sessions so enjoyable.

Swimming Team

Scout Swimming in South West Cheshire continues to provide vital life skills and badge work opportunities for our young people. Between October 2024 and April 2025, 45 Cubs and Scouts achieved various staged swimming badges across different skill levels:

- 8 non-swimmers, 10 in Stage 1, 9 in Stage 2, 12 in Stage 3, 5 in Stage 4, 4 in Stage 5
- 2 working towards Lifesaving

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Scout Swimming Team made up of dedicated leaders and volunteers for their commitment, hard work, and weekly support. Their enthusiasm and reliability are fundamental to the success of Scout Swimming in SWC.

Bob Binner

VOLUNTEERING AND DEVELOPMENT TEAM REPORT

Appointments Committee / Welcome Sub-Team

During 2024 the Appointments Committee appointed 20 new Leaders and approved 2 Changes of Role and 2 Additional Roles.

We have our new digital system and a new process for welcoming volunteers and this new process should mean that roles will move from Provisional to Full in a much shorter time. There remains a small backlog of Leaders who were waiting for interview when the “old” system ended and we are working our way through these as quickly as we can.

Under the new process a volunteer is added to the system by the Lead Volunteer (or recruiter / admin person in the Group) and by the end of 6 weeks should have created an account with scouts.org, completed their Growing Roots learning, had their DBS done, their references received and had their Welcome Conversation. They will be able to track their own progress online too.

The Welcome Conversation replaces the interview with the Appointments Committee, and should feel less intimidating for the new volunteer. The Conversation takes place at the new volunteer’s HQ with their Line Manager plus a person from the District Welcome sub-team. They can also have a buddy with them if they wish. It is their opportunity to ask any burning questions, and for us to establish that they fully understand what they have signed up for and are happy with their role.

No forms to fill in! Everything online! Bonus! And this process can be more flexible as Conversations are arranged to suit all involved.

Everything is recorded in the new system. References are still required, but the system will keep chasing if they are not received, or the person asked to provide an alternative.

However... someone from each Group (Group Lead Volunteer or recruiter) will need to do some additional learning to be able to take part in the Welcome Conversation. It’s an online package and shouldn’t take more than about 30 mins. And the sooner Groups have an accredited person, the sooner we can get new volunteers welcomed. Thanks to the members of the Appointments Committee who have agreed to take part in the new Welcome Conversations, and thanks to those who have “retired” for their contributions.

Jen Wilkinson

Team Leader, Welcome Sub-Team, Volunteering Development

Adult Awards & Recognition

As part of the volunteering development task there is a piece around recognising our volunteers for the excellent work, time and commitment to Scouting.

Since the start of transition, we have been reviewing the list of all Volunteers, who have served 5 years or more, was taken off the old Compass system prior to closing. This information has been analysed to ascertain which Volunteers have been awarded and recognised with awards, and those who meet requirements for awards.

After the first run through it was noticed that the district is quite far adrift from the number of adults who have gained awards as to the number of adult volunteers that could have attained these awards.

After careful consideration, of this list, the team are in the process of requesting supporting information from District Groups, District Teams and other District Activities to be able to put forward a number of volunteers names to receive adults volunteer awards.

This process is quite long winded as each submission requires careful consideration and examination of the evidence to ensure that the awards are given due consideration.

Watch this space!!

Lise Grasmeyer - Volunteering Development Team

Learning

During the past year we have seen some considerable changes to training [now learning!], both in attitude and methods. Volunteers are beginning to appreciate that not only is it a requirement and commitment but also provides a benefit to them and their sections with new skills and knowledge to achieve more balance within their programmes.

Over the year 2024 – 14 volunteers have been awarded Wood Badges across the district, this shows the commitment of our volunteers throughout the year, now we have transition Wood Badges become ‘optional’ but I hope we can maintain the number of Wood Badges being achieved over the coming year.

As part of transition the Learning provision falls within the district remit, this includes delivery of courses, so we are building a plan for courses particularly around Skills, aligning it to Residential Experiences [Nights Away], please look out for the course dates later this year.

We also need to remind all our volunteers that Core learning including mandatory learning for Safety, Safeguarding, Data Protection is now via the new learning

platform, please encourage all your volunteers within teams to check their learning status and not forgetting that Safety needs to be renewed [post transition] by July 2025. Each e-learning module should take approximately 45 minutes to complete with an assessment within the e-learning module. This can be accessed via the Scout Learning platform. <https://learn.scouts.org.uk/>

We also need to make sure our volunteers remain up-to-date with First Response Learning; this is an important skill to have, a reminder to all volunteers to check their expiry date and register for the next available course.

All face-to-face and virtual blended learning dates are currently published on the County website <https://www.cheshirescouts.org.uk/adult-support/learning>; however, we will be looking to host this on the district website later this year.

Thank you to everyone who helps support, promote, and assess learning across the district; with your input, we would not be able to support our volunteers.

Tim Owen
Volunteering and Development Team Lead



Section A

Independent Examiner's Report

Report to the trustees/ members of

Charity Name SOUTH WEST CHESHIRE DISTRICT SCHOOL COUNCIL

On accounts for the year ended

31st DECEMBER 2024

Charity no (if any)

Set out on pages

1 - 3

(remember to include the page numbers of additional sheets)

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of the above charity ("the Trust") for the year ended DD / MM / YYYY.

Responsibilities and basis of report

As the charity's trustees, you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011 ("the Act").

I report in respect of my examination of the Trust's accounts carried out under section 145 of the 2011 Act and in carrying out my examination, I have followed all the applicable Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the Act.

Independent examiner's statement

[The charity's gross income exceeded £250,000 and I am qualified to undertake the examination by being a qualified member of [insert name of applicable listed body]]. Delete [] if not applicable.

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no material matters have come to my attention in connection with the examination (other than that disclosed below *) which gives me cause to believe that in, any material respect:

- the accounting records were not kept in accordance with section 130 of the Charities Act; or
• the accounts did not accord with the accounting records; or
• the accounts did not comply with the applicable requirements concerning the form and content of accounts set out in the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 other than any requirement that the accounts give a 'true and fair' view which is not a matter considered as part of an independent examination.

I have no concerns and have come across no other matters in connection with the examination to which attention should be drawn in this report in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

* Please delete the words in the brackets if they do not apply.

Signed: P Taylor

Date: 9th JULY 2025

Name: DAVID TAYLOR

Relevant professional qualification(s) or body

INSTITUTE OF CHARTERED ACCOUNTANTS IN ENGLAND AND WALES

(if any):

Address:

Section B Disclosure

Only complete if the examiner needs to highlight material matters of concern (see CC32, Independent examination of charity accounts: directions and guidance for examiners).

Give here brief details of any items that the examiner wishes to disclose.

NONE

South West Cheshire District Scout Council Receipts and Payments Account

For the year from 1/1/24

to

31/12/24

Receipts and payments

2024

2023

Receipts

Donations, legacies and similar income		
Membership subscriptions	£65,801	£66,615
Less: Membership subscriptions paid on (National/County)	£55,670	£53,280
Net membership subscriptions retained	£10,131	£13,335
Scout Shop	£6,000	£8,000
Sub total	£16,131	£21,335
Activities		
Beavers	-	£1,256
Cubs	£2,080	£1,978
Scouts	-	-
Explorers	-	-
Leaders	-	-
Swimming Club	£3,558	£2,193
District events, activities, training and camps	-	£419
Sub total	£5,638	£5,846
Fundraising (gross)		
World Scouting Jamboree	-	£17,257
Other fundraising activities	£558	£347
Sub total	£558	£17,604
Other receipts		
3 rd SWC share of District store insurance	£286	-
Gang Show	£6,269	£2,500
Donations	£233	-
insurance refund	-	£142
closing charity deposit account	-	£207
loan repayment from 17 th SWC	£2,000	£2,000
Sub total	£8,787	£4,848
Investment income		
Bank interest	£659	£47
Sub total	£659	£47
Total Gross Income	£31,773	£49,680
Asset and investment sales, etc.	-	-
Total receipts	£31,773	£49,680

Receipts and payments

2024

2023

Payments

Activities		
Beavers	£173	£2,909
Cubs	£2,904	£1,721
Scouts	-	-
Explorers	£105	-
Young leaders	£226	£218
Leaders	£68	-
District youth forum	£179	-
District events, activities, training and camps	£650	£243
Swimming Club	£2,686	£2,792
Sub total	£6,991	£7,882
District running costs		
Water and Sewerage	£315	£277
Electricity and Gas	£636	£404
Insurance	£8,176	£8,168
Accountancy	£330	£330
Bank charges	£287	£269
Repairs and Renewals	-	£103
AGM and trustee expenses	£1,649	£516
MPLC (film licence)	£692	£878
Lottery licence	-	£20
MiFi	£189	£174
Branding	-	£543
Websites	£991	-
First Aid	£623	£44
Sub total	£13,888	£11,726
Exceptional expenses		
Donation to Guides	£800	-
Donations	£500	-
Gang Show	£5,454	£2,500
Payment on behalf of 18 th SWC	£463	-
Payment on behalf of 14 th SWC	-	£382
Squirrel grants	£600	-
closing charity deposit account	-	£207
Sub total	£7,817	£3,089
Fundraising expenses		
38 th SWC fundraising	£75	-
World Scouting Jamboree instalments	-	£17,240
Sub total	£75	£17,240
Total Gross Expenditure	£28,771	£39,937
Total payments	£28,771	£39,937
Net of receipts/(payments)	£3,002	£9,743
Cash funds last year end	£90,178	£80,435
Cash funds this year end	£93,181	£90,178

Activity Accounts

Section	Receipts	Payments	Opening balance	Closing balance
Milldale	£40,047	£38,323	£63,160	£64,884
Canoe and Kayak	£2,413	£598	£4,150	£5,964
Sailing	£2,020	£1,325	£5,281	£5,976
Climbing & Hillwalking	£1,580	£1,405	£284	£459
Shooting	£23,374	£22,164	£6,676	£7,886
Scout Shop *	-	-	£11,514	£16,929
Explorers	£29,403	£25,746	£10,168	£13,825
Gang Show	£26,743	£21,973	£7,990	£12,760

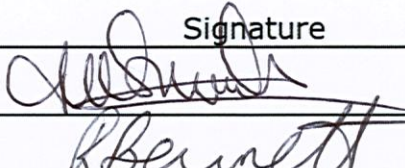
* Shop accounts done on accruals basis. Receipts & payments not available for District cash basis accounts.

Statement of assets and liabilities at the end of the year

	31/12/24	31/12/23
	£	£
Cash funds		
RBS current account	£10,304	£42,960
RBS Business Reserve	£15,064	-
RBS Liquidity 95	£20,229	-
NS&I investment account	£47,583	£47,218
Total cash funds	£93,181	£90,178
Non monetary assets for charity's own use (insured values)		
Land and buildings	£560,018	£523,828
Motor vehicles	£25,950	£25,950
Scouting equipment, furniture etc	£150,684	£146,440
Marine	£50,810	£50,810
Sub total	£787,462	£747,028
Liabilities		
Accounts not yet paid	-	-
Sub total	£0	£0

The above receipts and payments account and statement of assets and liabilities were approved by the Trustees on 3rd March 2025 and signed on their behalf by

Signature



Print Name

Jane Smart	Chair
Richard Bennett	Treasurer