SOUTH WEST CHESHIRE DISTRICT SCOUT COUNCIL

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

APRIL 17TH 2026

AGENDA

Annual General Meeting

South West Cheshire Scout Council

April 17th 2026

1. **Introduction and welcome**
2. **Apologies for absence**
3. **Governance topics**
   a. Approve the minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on 11/04/2025.
   b. Adopt the model constitution from Policy, Organisation and Rules (POR)
   c. Note the District's financial year
   d. Agree the maximum number of members that may be appointed to the Trustee Board
   e. Agree the quorum for future meetings of the District Scout Council (excluding this AGM)
4. **Review of the previous year**
   a. The District Lead Volunteer's review of Scouts during the past 12 months in South West Cheshire
   b. The County Lead Volunteer's remarks
   c. Receive and consider the Annual Report of the District Trustee Board, including the annual Statement of the Accounts
5. **Making appointments**
   a. Appoint members of the District Trustee Board, following recommendations from the open selection process initiated by the District Trustee Board
   b. Re-appoint District President and/or Vice Presidents
   c. Appoint the Independent Examiner
   d. Nominate representatives of the District Scout Council to represent the District on the County Scout Council
6. **My King's Scout Award – A presentation by Fabio Cura**
7. **Awards**
8. **Closing remarks**

DISTRICT OFFICERS 2025

Life President
Mr P F Taylor

President
Mr G Newbrook

Vice Presidents
Mr P Kent,
Mr M Bennion

Office Holders

Chairperson	Mrs J Smart
Treasurer	Mr R Bennett
Secretary	Mr J Bennett

District Trustee Board
Chairperson
Treasurer
District Lead Volunteer
Mrs S Joyce
Ms L Grasmeder
Mr C Shaw
Mr R Ashley
Mr J Barlow
Ms H Dorney
Mr M Rowe

District Lead Volunteer and Team Leader Support
Mr D Baldwin

Team Leader Programme
Mr C Shore

Team Leader 14 to 24 years
Mr T Austin

Youth Team Leader
Mr R Ashley

Team Leader Network
Mr J Whalley

Team Leader Activities
Rob Galloway

Team Leader Volunteer Development
Mr T Owen

District Chaplain Vacant

Registered Charity No: 506895
Scout Association Registered No: 10808

South West Cheshire District Scout Council

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting
Held on 11th April 2025
Nantwich Civic Hall

1.0 Welcome

Dan Baldwin, District Lead Volunteer opened the meeting. There were 49 members and 2 guests present.

Dan welcomed all those present, including the County Support Team Leader, Andrew Little and his wife Denise. He also welcomed our Life President Peter Taylor who was celebrating his 101st birthday that day.

Dan then said that at this point we usually remember those scouting colleagues who are no longer with us. Since our last AGM the following have gone home; Geoff Whiston, Ray Stafford, Robin Christian, Brian Jones, Bill Elliott, Kevin Duckett, Paul Spencer and Ray Salisbury.

Dan then handed over to Jane Smart who took the chair for the remainder of the meeting. Jane began by thanking the Civic Hall staff for the use of their premises

2.0 Apologies

Apologies had been received from Suzanne Gidlow, Jo Hillman, Andrew Hynes, Jake Ellam, Jamie Barlow, Sharon Joyce and Teresa Shaw.

3.0 Governance Matters

3a Minutes of AGM held on 12th April 2024

These had previously emailed to all members but it was noted that some present had not received that email. The Chair apologised and noted the need for follow up. The secretary undertook to look into this.

Proposed, seconded and accepted as a true record by those who had received a copy..

3b Re Adopt the Model Constitution from POR

The model constitution as recommended in POR had been circulated ahead of the meeting and Jane proposed the meeting to approve this. This was seconded and approved.

3c Note the District's Financial year.

Noted that this is January 1st to December 31st

3d Agree the Numbers of Members to be appointed to the Trustees Board

Jane stated that the outgoing Trustees Board had recommended that 10 persons are appointed, comprising four ex-officio members (Lead volunteer, Chair,

Treasurer and Youth Lead) and six trustees, POR requires that the board has at least two youth members (aged 18 to 24 years).
Jane proposed this figure which was seconded and approved by the council.

3e 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
Tom Austin spoke positively about the transition year from an Executive Committee to a Trustee Board, the difference between the two and the purpose of the Trustee Board. He explained the differing responsibilities for operations and governance.
A copy of the full slide deck used during this AGM will be found on the district web site.

4a Appoint Chair and Ex-Officio Members
Dan explained that the appointments of Jane as chair and Richard as treasurer were made in 2024 and for three years. Reece Ashley will be the new ex-officio District Youth Lead and is appointed for three years to 2028. Dan's appointment is for five years to 2029

4b Appoint members of the District Trustees Board following recommendations from the open selection process initiated by the District Trustees Board.
Dan explained the process agreed by the board and that the following should be appointed for the specified terms:

Jamie Barlow	Until 2027 AGM
Lise Grasmeder	Until 2027 AGM
Mark Rowe	Until 2027 AGM
Helen Dorney	Until 2028 AGM
Sharon Joyce	Until 2028 AGM
Craig Shaw	Until 2028 AGM (N.B. Craig is also the second 18/24 rep)

Dan thanked those trustees who were standing down at this AGM, for their service:
Diane Blurton
David Brough
Jake Ellam
Ingrid Shaw
Tom Austin
Carl Shaw
Andrew Whalley
John Bennett

4c Appoint District Presidents and Vice Presidents
Dan explained the recommendations to the meeting that:
Gerald Newbrook should be appointed District President
Mike Bennion MBE should be appointed District Vice President.

Jane asked the meeting to approve these appointments, which were enthusiastically carried.

5.0 Appointment of the Auditor

Proposed and carried that 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.

Nathan Betteridge and Jack Whalley had been proposed and seconded, the meeting approved these appointments.

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. Jane said she did not intend to go through the report line by line but she wanted to thank all contributors to the report, and everyone who has been a part of the work in SWC and its many successes in 2024. Trustees would ensure communication was a priority for 2025 in view of the apparent issues with circulation of papers to some attendees for this AGM.

She stated that the Trustees priorities for 2025 were:

- Focus on Finance
- Scout Shop and District HQ
- Guidance and Governance
- Managing Risk

Jane stated that due to the late submission of accounts from some district activities the Statement of Accounts has not yet been independently verified but will be done so before the submission is made to the Charity Commission.

At this point Richard gave an overview of the 2024 accounts which were displayed on the screen

- Income dropped by over £5,000
    - £2000 less from the shop
    - £3000 less in net membership subscriptions
    - District levy had been dropped £1 per head in 2023
    - No big fund raising events in 2024
- We might create a new RBS sub account and show major fundraising as an activity account in future.
- We opened interest bearing RBS accounts in September 2024 and this shows a big increase in interest since then. This should be even bigger next year when we have a full year of interest.

- We managed to reduce the cost of the Motion Picture Licence but in the main district running costs are up.
    - Some of these are one offs e.g. the website.
- We have made adjustments to the 2025 Budget as a result.

The chair thanked the trustees and the secretary John Bennett MBE for their work during the year and John for the arrangements for this AGM. She also reiterated Dan's remarks in thanking the outgoing trustees.

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

8.0 Explorer Scouts Presentation

Graham Proctor introduces Charlotte Shaw and Jacob Lee of Shipton ESU, who gave a presentation about an event they arranged for their unit. The chosen event revolved around the Chinese New Year and was the final project they had to complete in achieving their YouShaped Awards.

The presentation received a resounding round of applause from all present and Charlotte and Jacob were thanked by Jane for their work.

9.0 The District Lead Volunteer

Dan gave his report at the end of his first year in office. His talk was displayed on the screen from the slide deck;

- He started with a thank you to everyone involved in the delivery of Scouting in SWC in 2024
- He shared highlights of 2024
- He outlined the new district structure and explained a number of vacancies still to be filled

Jane thanked Dan for his enormous personal contribution as Lead Volunteer in his first year of office.

10.0 The County Support Team Leader

Andrew Little spoke about the year in scouting as it affected the County. He also used a slide deck for this purpose speaking about:

- The Census and growth
- Upcoming events in the County

He finished with a big Thank You to all.

11.0 Awards

Dan presented Graham Shaw with the Bar to the Silver Acorn

Gerald then spoke to the meeting to say thanks for his appointment as District President.

He went on to explain that a Blue Plaque had been arranged to recognise the work of Willmott Welch, who was the first Scout Master in Crewe, in creating the 1st South West Cheshire (Christ Church) Scouts. The troop met at what is now the Royal Hotel and the Town Council who have procured the plaque, at Gerald's instigation, will in due course have the plaque mounted on a wall at the Royal.

Peter Taylor, Life President, asked to speak to the meeting and did so for five minutes without notes. In particular he said that we should not look back but concentrate on going forward. At the conclusion of his words he received standing ovation.

Jane closed the meeting at 21.00 and thanked everyone for their contributions and attendance.

John Bennett
District Secretary, South West Cheshire Scouts. May 2025

Minutes approved by the District Trustee Board on 3rd June 2025.

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Jane Smart, District Chair

ANNUAL REPORT 2026

TRUSTEE BOARD

2025 was the first full calendar year of our Trustee Board operating in its new format. We've formed a strong team, and I thank all Trustees for their hard work, contributions, expertise and commitment as we ramped up the frequency of meetings to make progress in support of Scouting in our District. We meet Quarterly face to face with a full agenda, then have action follow up's monthly via Teams. Our Actions are captured online as well as in our meeting minutes and we find it keeps us on track.

Governance matters. By 31st July 2025, a mandatory new safety training module had to be completed by all volunteers in Scouting. This followed the April 2024 Prevention of Future Deaths Report into the tragic death of an Explorer Scout on the Great Orme during a Scouting activity. Trustees have monitored compliance closely throughout the year and will continue to do so. With thanks to Dan Baldwin, District Lead Volunteer, his team and all volunteers, South West Cheshire was compliant with this requirement. Safety training will need to be completed by all volunteers every three years.

The Trustee Board will work during the coming year to ensure ongoing compliance with Charity Commission Regulatory Advice published in February 2026 to implement safety and safeguarding commitments designed to protect everyone involved in Scouting. As part of this, by 30th April 2026, all Group Chairs must certify in a return to County via a Microsoft Form, that all their Trustees have read, understood and will comply with controls, procedures and structures in place to keep everyone safe in scouts. I am in contact directly with your Group Chairs to ensure that South West Cheshire is compliant, and at our AGM will confirm the status of this important task.

In 2025, Trustees adopted a new District Reserves Policy and migrated from the use of Microsoft Excel to a software package (FreeAgent) for the management and preparation of our accounts. Sharon Joyce, Trustee (and practising accountant) has been super helpful in establishing our Chart of Accounts and in supporting Richard Bennett, Treasurer to test and implement it. This approach is in line with our rollout of new bank accounts for District Assets last year and into 2026. I hope those of you with access to the new bank accounts are finding them easy to manage. This move enhances governance oversight and controls and hopefully saves Richard time going forwards, too.

In 2025, the Milldale Bunkhouse project has progressed significantly, latterly with the formation of a small sub-group led by Helen Dorney, who as a Trustee has excellent experience of managing building projects and of grant and funding applications. This is a pivotal year, and we expect to submit revisions to our approved planning application in the short to medium term and are contracting for building inspection services, having already received a Quantity Surveyor's report. Funding is of course

the greatest challenge, and available funds have been identified, with submissions at varying stages as I write.

The Scout Shop and District HQ has been a hot topic for Trustees, with discussions about its safety and fitness for purpose. After review by our architect, we understood it would be both impractical and very expensive to try to modify the staircase access to the first floor. The District Risk Register has been updated and will be kept under regular review.

Trustees have created a Scope of Work for the rewire of the Scout Shop so that electrical contractors can quote on a like for like basis prior to appointment. We hope this work can be conducted over the summer of 2026. Further work to ensure safety and maintain this important District Asset will be planned for this year and beyond.

Trustees continue to rely on John Bennett for the Annual Census return and thank him for all his work in this area. John kindly collates this 2025 Annual Report on our behalf and leads the communication around those who have sadly 'Gone Home' with dignity and care. John has also made the arrangements for our use of Nantwich Civic Hall for our 2026 AGM once more, and we are grateful for his support as ever.

We hope everyone will support the District Gang Show from Wednesday 6th – Saturday 9th May at Crewe Lyceum, and expect a fantastically enjoyable show as ever.

I'd like to close my update on a productive year with thanks to Reece Ashley for an excellent year's work as our ex-officio District Youth Lead on the Trustee Board. He has resigned his post because of the time demands of his Apprenticeship, and he worked alongside Dan and I to recruit his replacement, Ryan Wright. The quality of candidates for interview was high; we have super young people coming up in South West Cheshire and they are a credit to themselves and to Scouting. Trustees are keen to increase the representation of young people to ensure scouting here is truly Youth Shaped, and our AGM agenda will see a proposal to create another Youth Trustee on our Trustee Board alongside Ryan and Craig Shaw.

I hope to see you there.

Jane Smart
District Chair

District Secretary's Report
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 2025 in South West Cheshire:

Member of the British Empire
Ian Potts

Silver Wolf
David Hollinshead

Bar to the Silver Acorn
Graham Shaw

Silver Acorn
Duncan Batty
Gill Evanson
Ian Potts
Teresa Shaw
Carl Shore
Andy Thomas

The Award for Merit`
Sarah Bennett
Gaynor Bracey
Tony Hulme
Liam Potts
Gemma Wright

Chief Scout's Commendation for Good Service:
Tom Austin
Claire Hales
Andy Ladley

Long Service Awards
Chief Scout's 50 years Service Award
Joan Hollinshead

Chief Scout's 40 years Service Award
Suzanne Gidlow
Terence Dodd

Chief Scout's 25 years Service Award
David Pinney
Charlotte Pinney
Alwyn Rigden

Chief Scout's 20 years Service Award
Cathryn Smith
Helen Dorney

Kings Scout Award
Fabio Cura

Youth Awards
114 Chief Scouts Bronze Awards
68 Chief Scouts Silver Awards
45 Chief Scouts Gold Awards
3 Chief Scouts Platinum Awards
9 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:

Peg Taylor George Basnett Aubrey Brazier
Peter Dawson Rev Bill Baker

CENSUS RETURN COMPARISON

	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026
Groups	**22**	**22**	**22**	**21**	**20**	**20**
Squirrels					**33**	**23**
Beaver	**255**	**313**	**336**	**343**	**331**	**333**
Cub	**346**	**346**	**344**	**362**	**357**	**378**
Scout	**371**	**344**	**363**	**333**	**328**	**329**
Explorer*	**120**	**122**	**123**	**134**	**150**	**146**
Network	**90**	**25**	**10**	**6**	**2**	**0**
Adults	**513**	**505**	**341**	**418**	**396**	**433**
Total	**1978**	**1578**	**1476**	**1596**	**1544**	**1642**

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

John Bennett
District Secretary

DISTRICT LEADERSHIP TEAM
District Lead Volunteer

Where to begin with 2025? Quite simply – what a year!
As you'll see throughout this report and the various contributions from across the District, it has been another outstanding year for Scouts in South West Cheshire.

One of the highlights of 2025 was celebrating our very first cohort of Squirrel Scouts achieving their Chief Scout's Acorn Awards. They joined our Beavers and Cubs, who received their Chief Scout's Bronze and Silver Awards, at our presentation evening in June where we proudly presented an incredible 102 awards earned in 2024 and 2025. This was followed by a further 60 Scouts and Explorers achieving their top awards at Celebrating Success in November.

These achievements reflect the consistently high quality of programmes delivered across the District. From Squirrels through to Network, young people continue to benefit from a broad, balanced programme offering challenge, adventure, and opportunities to grow.

As always, outdoor adventure remained at the very heart of what we do. Alongside a full calendar of District activities including climbing, shooting, hillwalking, hiking, and water activities, we also hosted two major events at Milldale. Firstly, our always popular District Camp in May and the Waterloo Shooting Competition Camp in June. If you've never seen District Camp in action, this was brilliantly captured by our media team so check out our YouTube channel for the video.

We also selected 5 fantastic young people to represent us at the next World Scout Jamboree in Poland in summer 2027. Congratulations to Jack, Emma, Jacob, Erica, and Elsa who I know will be brilliant ambassadors for South West Cheshire. They now face the unenviable task of fundraising the £19,000 needed to get there so please keep an eye out for upcoming fundraising events and initiatives and support these if you can.

Of course, the value of Scouts goes far beyond the activities themselves. These experiences, grounded in our Scout values, support the wellbeing of over 1,200 young people across South West Cheshire every week. They provide opportunities to build skills, develop confidence, and form lasting friendships. The impact is significant, even if it is not always immediately visible.

Finally, and most importantly, thank you. Everything you read in this report is made possible by the time, energy, and dedication of our amazing volunteers. Whether you lead a section, support behind the scenes, organise events, or help out when you can – your contribution matters greatly.

Scouts in South West Cheshire continues to make a real and lasting difference to young people's lives—and that is because of you.

Dan Baldwin
District Lead Volunteer

SUPPORT TEAM

Safety

The after effects of the tragic death of an explorer on the Great Orme continue to affect the Scout Movement as the Coroners report and instructions, are being implemented. One of the actions from this was to introduce In January 2025 a new safety training package, We were given until the middle of July to get every leader through this training, To get that completed within the timeframe was a major achievement and involved a lot of work from a huge number of people who deserve a lot of credit and thanks,

In 2025 there were two incidents in SWC which met the criteria for reporting to Scout HQ. Both incidents were dealt with appropriately but did not require any changes to the risk assessments in place. There were also two near misses which were reported to Scout HQ. In both cases lessons to be learned were identified and implemented.

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

John Bennett
District Safety Lead

Scout Shop

The Scout Shop in Crewe enjoyed another successful year in 2025. At a time when more people are turning to online retailers, it is something to be proud of that we are able to maintain our local Scout Shop.

The shop remains an important first point of contact for many families, offering friendly advice and support, particularly for those new to Scouts. We help them find the right uniform, the right fit, and ensure a warm welcome into the movement.

Retail also plays a vital role in supporting the District financially. Profits contribute towards our ongoing costs, helping us to keep the District levy as low as possible for all of our members.

Turnover has consistently grown in recent years, with a modest increase in 2025 continuing the positive trend seen over the past three years.

During the year, we faced an unexpected challenge when Scout Stores, the sole UK supplier of Scout uniforms and badges, increased delivery charges and reduced wholesale discounts on uniforms (partially offset by improved discounts on badges). Thanks to the proactive and diligent work of the shop team, we adapted by placing larger, less frequent orders. As a result, we were able to secure minimise the effect of the change in terms, ensuring there was no negative impact on margins which in fact ended up slightly stronger in 2025 than in previous years.

Once again, thanks go to our fantastic team of dedicated Scout and Guide volunteers who run and staff the shop. Many of them balance this alongside other roles across the District, and I am incredibly grateful for the time and commitment they continue to give.

Dan Baldwin
District Lead Volunteer

Milldale Campsite Report 2025

Milldale continues to be a popular site for both daytime and evening use; however, overall demand declined in 2025. Evening visits were significantly affected by the suspension of climbing and archery sessions due to reduced leader availability, resulting in the pause of evening activity sessions.

The site welcomed:
• 1,228 day visitors +(42)
• 2,281 evening visitors –(772)
• 668 campers -(590)

Camping numbers decreased by 47% compared to 2024 (1,258 → 668). However, this excludes the District Camp numbers, which always reduces the camping numbers in the year. The reduction is mainly in in-district camping.

Financial Position

The campsite remains financially strong, generating approximately £16,958 in 2025 from direct bookings.

The new invoice process has been highly effective, resulting in £0 outstanding invoices for 2025.

Income remains seasonal, with most revenue generated between May and September.

Milldale Activities
2025 was a mixed year for adventurous activities at Milldale. To encourage greater use it was decided to adopt a different approach and have activity days. Unfortunately, the opposite happened, and we have now reverted to the old system.

Adventurous activities saw regular use throughout the year by groups from “out of district” many of these had not previously tried Tree Climbing and Crate Stacking.

While we were quite quiet with use by District groups, it did give us the opportunity to carry out maintenance and where necessary replace equipment on both the archery range and climbing wall. New harnesses, helmets and ropes have been purchased for the climbing wall. Maintenance was carried out on the tower structure and a deep clean took place.

The archery range has seen replacement arrows and strings purchased along with the refurbishment of the boss stands, bosses and a new stand being built.

72 participants took part in evening archery sessions and 21 in climbing sessions. This represents a reduction compared to previous years due to limited leader availability, which resulted in evening bookings being paused for all 2025. Activity sessions are resuming in the evenings for 2026, which should see evening visits return to previous levels.

Cathie Wainwright
Milldale Site Team

Site Maintenance
Ground maintenance has been a key focus following storm damage and tree loss. A new programme has been introduced to plant at least 20 mature trees (6–8 ft) each year to protect the woodland.

The new flail mower has significantly improved control of Himalayan Balsam, with visible results already. The Toro site mower has also been replaced through the vehicle replacement fund.

Volunteers
A small but dedicated volunteer team continues to support the site. Thank you to all volunteers and team members for their ongoing commitment.

Looking Ahead: Our Priorities
- Increasing overnight stays, with a particular focus on growing in-district camping numbers
- Working closely with the Nights Away team to promote and support more residential experiences across the district

- Reintroducing and expanding evening activities , following improved leader availability
- Engaging with the Youth Forum to further develop and shape site activities, ensuring they reflect the interests and needs of young people
- Continuing the tree planting programme to protect and enhance the woodland environment
- Maintaining strong financial control and processes, building on the success of zero outstanding invoices

This year, the team made a significant effort to manage the Himalayan Balsam problem. This 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 Chair

PROGRAMME TEAM REPORT 2025

What a great year the Squirrels, Beavers, Cubs, and Scouts had in 2025. It was filled with groups being active and out and about, camping, walking, sailing, and swimming, to name just a few. Thanks must go to all the Leaders and those who supported these activities.

Cub District Craft Competition

It was a pleasure to hold the District Craft Competition. This year, 17th SWC kindly hosted the event. It is always impressive to see how creative the Cubs are when they work as a team to create a model. This year's theme was how they imagined a new Crewe town centre. Eight teams took part, and selecting a winner was not easy. The 16th were worthy winners, well done to them all.

Beaver Challenge

Beavers took part in the Annual Beaver Challenge at The 17th SWC The Beavers enthusiastically completed an array of challenges during the afternoon, working hard as a team with skill, determination, and true Beaver spirit. The worthy winners were 41std who went on to represent us at the County competition.

Chief Scout's Acorn, Bronze and Silver Award Evening

In 2025 there were:
3 Acorn Awards for Squirrels
87 Bronze Awards for Beavers
70 Silver Awards for Cubs

The certificates were presented at a special event held at Malbank School. This is a fantastic achievement. Over 400 people attended the evening, and it was wonderful to see all the young people receive their awards.

Well done to all the Leaders for the hard work that has gone into supporting young people in achieving the highest awards in their sections.

District Camp

Over 800 Squirrels, Beavers, Cubs, Scouts, Explorers, Young Leaders, Leaders, and Camp Team members took part in the 2025 District Camp.

It was impressive to see all sections working together throughout the weekend. There was a wide range of activities including climbing, archery, shooting, bouncy castles, laser tag, Nerf, and the slippery pole. The Explorers also went off-site to take part in Ninja Warrior and a Treasure Trail hike.

It was brilliant to see everyone singing around the campfire. Events like this do not take place without a huge amount of support from many members of the District Team, and our thanks go to them all.

Chief Scouts Gold, Explorers Platinum Awards, and Young Leader Belts and DoE Awards

It was great to see that 45 Scouts achieved their Gold Award, 6 Explorers achieved their Platinum Award, and 9 Young Leaders achieved their Belt. Many of these young people went on to attend the County Awards Celebrating Success held at Parr Hall in Warrington. It was fantastic to see them receive their awards and celebrate this achievement in front of parents and family.

Cub Athletes and Athletics Plus Day

Seventy six Cubs took part and completed their Athletes and Athletics Plus awards. There were running races, skipping relays, cricket ball throwing, and jumping activities. All Cubs worked extremely hard despite the rain.

Unfortunately, we were not able to run the tug of war due to the ground being so wet. Hopefully we will be back to normal in 2026.

Squirrel and Beaver Family Fun Day

This was the first time this event had been run and it proved to be a great success. Over 100 Squirrels and Beavers attended with their siblings and families, with more than 300 people on site at a sunny Milldale.

A wide range of activities took place during the day including circus skills, reptile encounters, climbing, inflatables, drumming, axe throwing, archery, and fire lighting. The weather was kind and everyone had a great day.

Christmas Party

Just over 200 Beavers and Cubs held their Christmas celebrations at Milldale Campsite, with a treasure trail, Christmas crafts, s'mores, hot chocolate, activities, and a visit from Santa, who fitted us into his busy schedule.
Beavers and Cubs all went home with a gift. Thanks again to all the Leaders who supported the event and made it such a success.

We would like to take this opportunity to say a huge thank you to all Leaders, Young Leaders, and helpers for the time and effort that went into 2025.

We are looking forward to 2026, with lots of activities due to take place in the months ahead. The Planning Team is already working hard to make this another strong year, including the Craft Competition, Scouts Patrol Competition Day, Squirrel and Beaver Camp, Cub Camp, Sports Day, and our Christmas Party in December.

The Programme Team

14-24 Team Report

2025 was a strong year for the 14-24 section, with plenty of progress made in many areas. Looking ahead to 2026, we want to build on those to celebrate even greater successes.

Explorers

All 4 Explorer units hold regular weekly meetings in their respective partnership venues and are very well attended, as seen by a 10% increase in membership across the units year on year

.

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, with two of our units having the opportunity to attend a summer camp in Ireland for Shipton and Wales for Drake.

In addition, we have seen several district wide activities across the year. We had 60 Explorers enjoy District Camp in May, followed by a now, annual Sports Day & BBQ at Milldale in July. We also held the first Explorer Fest over the bank holiday in August with live music and a DJ until the late evening. We also took 40 Explorers off to Manchester in October for Manchester Monopoly, a great day out by all!

We've also been lucky enough over the last year to welcome several new leaders across many units but growing numbers continue to put additional strain on the smaller leadership teams. We are looking to see if anyone is able to support these units, in particular at Fiennes so would welcome conversations with anyone interested. Thanks to all the leaders for their continued dedication to Explorers this last 12 months, and to Cathie Wainwright for all of her help with the finances and administration.

Young Leaders

The Young Leader unit has once again proved to be very successful, with full sets of B-K modules, and several module A's run across the year. Module K continues to be the most popular with places filled quickly.

Membership stands at 89 across the district, 34 of which are not attending another Explorer unit. 17/19 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 2025. And also thanks to all of our Young Leaders for the support they give our sections every week, a real asset to all groups.

Top Awards

In May we held a Top Awards & DofE support session, with over 50 attendees from across the district online for a really informative evening. From a Top Award

perspective, the district was very well represented at the County Celebrating Success event again, with 3 Chief Scout Platinum Awards and 9 Young Leader Belt Buckles. This number will hopefully increase in 2026 with Catherine Freeman now heading up the DofE sub team, expeditions across all levels are planned with interest still high in this area. Anybody wanting to start, or any leaders unsure of how to support members going through the scheme are warmly welcomed to reach out for assistance.

Network

SWC Network section had a strong start to the year with several meetings held. Progress however has been stalled due to participation struggles and leadership availability. We are looking to help appoint team members to this section, so please reach out if you are willing to.

Tom Austin
14-24 Team Leader

District Youth Forum

Over the past 12 months, we have delivered three District Youth Forums, with a fourth taking place shortly after the New Year. These have included full forums covering a wide range of topics, including District Camp 2025 and Chamboree 2026.

Attendance has remained broadly consistent with the previous year, with 44 members engaged in the forum by year-end. Encouragingly, we have seen a wider range of groups represented, including some attending for the first time. However, it has become increasingly clear that further growth is needed across the district. There are still groups not represented, and participation from the 10.5–14.5 age range remains lower than it should be. While Explorer representation has been strong, with all four units and the Young Leaders Unit engaged, there is a clear need for greater support from Scout Troop leaders to ensure broader representation. As a result, the forum continues to be Explorer-heavy, although discussions have remained productive and valuable.

During the year, I introduced a recommended attendance ratio for groups: a minimum of two representatives per group, or for larger groups, one representative per ten troop members. This aims to encourage fair and consistent representation across the district.

At a wider level, the district has also been represented at both County Youth Forums held in April and November, ensuring that the views of our young people are heard at county level.

Through the District Youth Forums, we have actively promoted the YouShape Award, providing attendees with ideas and practical ways to take youth-shaped Scouting back

into their own sections. It was particularly pleasing to see at Celebrating Success that the district was among the highest for the number of YouShape Awards achieved.

Looking ahead, the Youth Forum will play a key role in shaping and supporting the planning and delivery of district events. With strong links to both the programme team and the trustee board, youth-shaped Scouting is firmly at the forefront of future activity. Both teams are in regular contact with the Youth Forum, ensuring young people are involved not only operationally but also, where possible, in governance.

At the end of 2025, I made the difficult decision that I was no longer able to commit the time required to fully fulfil the responsibilities of District Youth Lead. Following this, I stepped down from the role, and a robust selection process was undertaken. I am pleased to share the information that Ryan Wright has been appointed as the new District Youth Lead for South West Cheshire. Over the past month, and continuing into the coming months, we have begun a structured handover to ensure continuity and ongoing progress.

As I step away from the role, I would like to say that, although my time has been relatively short, it has been incredibly rewarding. Seeing young people use the Youth Forum to share their ideas and then watching those ideas come to life has been truly inspiring. I would like to thank Dan, and everyone who has supported me, for the opportunity. A special thank you also goes to Cassie and Nathan for their invaluable support in planning and delivering the forums — I could not have done it without you. Finally, I wish Ryan and his team every success as I hand over the reins.

Reece Ashley
District Youth Forum

ADVENTUROUS ACTIVITIES

Another good year with all the usual activities on offer, but the downside of an increasingly busy District calendar is that it proved impossible to avoid some date clashes which limited the availability of both Scouts and Instructors, with many leaders being asked to fill multiple roles across different events.

KAYAKING

Around 70 Scouts enjoyed our Taster days and 40 went on to take part in the training courses for Stages 2 & 3 of the Paddlesport badges.

Five of our more experienced Explorers & Scouts have now joined the Crewe & Nantwich Canoe Club where they are greatly enhancing the skills that they originally learned as young Scouts. They are all hoping to gain Activity Permits this year, to help teach the next generation of Scouts.



BELL BOATS

Following the success of our first event in 2024, three more of our leaders successfully gained Bell Boat Permits at the County assessment course in May, enabling us to run a much bigger event with three boats on the water at Rudyard Reservoir in October. Despite a rather chilly day, great fun was had by all.



CLIMBING

Climbing and Abseiling proved extremely popular at District camp, but instructor availability limited other taster sessions.

A full day's training course at Milldale in October resulted in 11 Scouts gaining their Climbing badges and after a follow-up session at North West Face, 3 Explorers completed theirs.



HILL WALKING & CYCLING

Catherine Freeman has been offering events for Sections who request them and has run a number of successful events including an Explorer trip up Yr Wyddfa (Snowdon)

As always, thanks are due to all Permit Holder (including our very capable YL instructors) who enable our activities to go ahead.

Rob Galloway
Team Leader (Activities sub-team)

Other Activities

Shooting Team

Rifle, Pistol & Crossbow Target Shooting

A hectic and very successful year for the district shooting team. Across the year we have over 1,110 people take part in either rifle, pistol or crossbow activities.

Shooting has been run each month at Milldale with 39 different activities taking place (44 in 2024). Most months we have managed to run 1 district session, open to all over 10 years old as well as taster sessions for various groups both within SWC and from other districts.

We have held training courses to train leaders to be able to run shooting and crossbow events for scouts.

The Waterloo Shooting competition & camp in June proved to be very popular and saw 317 people take part across the weekend & again with the absence of a Scouts in person national competition, it was the largest competition in the UK

Support for competitions continued with the group supporting the running of the national Intercounty competition at Aldersley in May. At the competition itself 80% of the squad representing Cheshire were from the district, with Cheshire winning overall team gold medals in 2 categories and Silver in the third. As such retaining the overall Intercounty trophy.

Scout Shoot in September at Bisley (Surrey) bought more success with a group from SWC attending and picking up medals in all categories.

The year's competitions ended with the SWC team winning the Cheshire Inter District Competition. So, for the second year running that's the best teams at District, County and National levels.

Similarly, to the comment in last year's report it would be great to see more support from the district groups at the Saturday sessions & most of the competitors for Waterloo are from outside of the district.

As a reminder that for those volunteers in SWC district holding a YPS qualification, to keep your certification current you need to complete several sessions each year. This can easily be done by the occasional monthly session at Milldale. Please contact aaron.baxter@swcscouts.org.uk for session details.

The UK Government will shortly be consulting on new legislation regarding the sale and licencing of crossbows; its outcome may result in us not being able to offer crossbow as an activity.



Aaron Baxter
SWC Shooting Team

Sailing Team

Sailing remains a popular activity within the district, with almost 100 Beavers, Cubs, Scouts, and Explorer Young Leaders taking part in each of the two sailing taster sessions held on 21st June and 5th July. For many, this was their first experience of sailing but we also had a number returning again, having enjoyed the taster sessions in prior years. A few parents and leaders were also able to take part.

We had a mixture of good winds and low winds with all participants gaining valuable experience on the water. The addition of water pistols, pirate flag and lots of splashing made for a fun couple of days.

Thanks go 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.

We also had Scouts taking part and gaining qualifications in RYA Sailing courses, some going on to join the WFSC junior section in order to progress their sailing beyond the taster day experience. We also had one Explorer gain his RYA PB2 power boat qualifications.





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Melanie Braviner
SWC District Sailing Team

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
SWC District Swimming Team

Stage Performances
Following a hugely successful 2024 Gang Show the core team have spent their time during the intervening period planning the next extravaganza to be held in the Lyceum Theatre in May 2026 just a few weeks after this AGM

The core team ran a base at the 2025 District Camp to showcase the Gang Show and seek potential recruits for 2026. As a consequence a number of volunteers came forward and have signed up as cast members for 2026.

Have you got your ticket? Block bookings for groups are available with one free ticket for every ten tickets sold.

John Bennett
Gang Show Secretary

Nights Away Team

Over the past twelve months, the SWC Scouts Nights Away Team has been actively supporting volunteers across the district in gaining the appropriate permits required to run safe and enjoyable residential and camping experiences for young people.

A key focus of the team's work has been carrying out assessments for volunteers who have applied for **Campsite Permits** and **Greenfield Permits with restrictions**. These assessments have ensured that applicants meet the required standards and understand the responsibilities involved in leading Nights Away experiences.

In addition to conducting assessments, the team has been providing guidance and advice to volunteers throughout the application process. This has included helping them understand the requirements needed to gain their permit, offering practical

support, and ensuring they are well prepared to deliver safe and compliant camping activities.

Alongside permit work, the team has also been developing opportunities for international experiences. Over the past year, work has been underway to organise an **International trip to Belgium planned for 2027**. Preparations have included early planning, coordination, and exploring opportunities to provide Scouts with a memorable international adventure.

The Nights Away Team remains committed to supporting leaders, maintaining high standards for residential and camping activities, and helping provide exciting opportunities for young people within SWC Scouts.

Ingrid Shaw
Nights Away Team Leader

VOLUNTEERING AND DEVELOPMENT TEAM REPORT

The District Volunteering Development Team have been working hard over the last year to make sure all volunteers in their District have a positive and enjoyable volunteering experience and making it easy for people to join and learn new skills.
For those unfamiliar, the District Volunteering Development Team consists of the following sub-teams:

Welcome – Making sure our volunteers are welcomed into Scouting, easily and smoothly including supporting our volunteers to share any reasonable adjustments or any other needs they may have.

Learning – Assist and guide our volunteers to engage in suitable learning opportunities and allowing time for them to share best practice and overcome challenges collectively.

Awards & Recognition – Support and recognise our volunteers for all the work and time the put into Scouting. Each of these sub-teams plays a crucial role in supporting our volunteers in Scouting.

Volunteering Development Team - Welcome Sub-Team

This sub-team consists of 8 members of the former Appointments Committee.

The process of welcoming a new Leader to a Group or to the District Team takes place alongside the “Growing Roots” learning, DBS clearance and receipt of references. A

role will remain Provisional until all this is completed, and this should happen within 3 months of their start date.

A Welcome Conversation is an informal meeting between the new volunteer, their line manager (or the person who recruited them) plus a member of the District Team, arranged at a time which is mutually convenient. They normally take around 10-15 minutes, depending on the previous experience of the new volunteer. It is also a chance for the new volunteer to ask questions about their role.

An additional learning module must have been completed by a Group member who wishes to be involved in a Welcome Conversation. Ideally, a Leader in each Section should be available for this task.

There are still far too many new volunteers who require a Welcome Conversation according to our digital system. It is the responsibility of the Group Lead Volunteer to contact the District Team to arrange the Conversation – not the role of the District Team to contact the new volunteer.

However, it has frequently been the case that a GLV will think a new volunteer requires a Conversation when in fact they have been assigned an incorrect role.

Thanks to the members of the Welcome sub-team who have adapted to the new system.

Thanks to all who have completed Welcome Conversation training in the Groups so that these can happen in a timely manner.

Jen Wilkinson
Welcome Sub-Team Leader
Volunteering Development Team

Volunteering Development Team – Learning

Over the past year, 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 2025 – Only **3** volunteers have been awarded Wood Badges across the district, this is largely due to the Wood Badges have become ‘optional’ since transition, this is clearly an area to work on over the next year.

We also need to remind all our volunteers that ***Core Growing Roots 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 there own learning status.

Each e-learning module should take approximately 45 minutes complete with an assessment within the e-learning module. This can be access via the Scout Learning platform. https://learn.scouts.org.uk/

It's also encouraging to see that we are fully compliant in terms of learning with both Safety and Safeguarding across the district, thanks to all our Volunteers for completing this within the timescales and Lead Volunteers for the support and guidance.

We also need to make sure our volunteers remain up-to date with First Response Learning this is an important skill to have. **115** Volunteers completed First Response Learning across the district throughout the year, a reminder to all volunteers to check their expiry date and register for the next available course.

Nationally it has been recognised that traditional Scouting Skills are on a downwards spiral, this is being addressed as part of branching out courses which hopefully will be refreshed later this year, however we are also looking to run a Residential Skills weekend to help with this.

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.

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

Tim Owen
Team Leader
Volunteering Development Team

Volunteering Development Team - Adult Awards & Recognition

This year, this District has seen a notable increase in the number of awards presented to our Adult Leaders. This growth reflects both the dedication of our adult volunteers and a desire to recognise this commitment to our Scouting family.

There are a number of reasons for this increase. Leaders of sections and groups have become more aware of the adult recognition process and available awards, and also through me (Lise) as the Awards Co-ordinator.

The impact of increased adult recognition has been totally positive. Recognised leaders have expressed feelings of being valued for their time and dedication, which will lead to improved morale and also encourage continued involvement.

The increases in adult awards this year have set us on a path to continue to promote awareness of the awards and recognise the commitment that our adult leaders give to Scouting. I am hopeful that we can sustain this increased level of awards being achieved within the District for years to come.

Lise Grasmeder
Awards Co-Ordinator
Volunteering Development Team

South West Cheshire District Scout Council
Receipts and Payments Account

For the year from 1/1/25 **to** 31/12/25

Receipts and payments

	2025	2024
Receipts		
Donations, legacies and similar income		
Membership subscriptions	£72,974	£65,801
Less: Membership subscriptions paid on (National / County)	£63,494	£55,670
Net membership subscriptions retained	£9,480	£10,131
Scout Shop	£5,500	£6,000
Sub total	£14,980	£16,131
Activities		
Cubs	-	£2,080
Swimming Club	£2,712	£3,558
District events, activities, training and camps	£145	-
Sub total	£2,857	£5,638
Fundraising (gross)		
Other fundraising activities	£2,000	£558
Sub total	£2,000	£558
Other receipts		
3rd SWC share of District store insurance	-	£286
Gang Show	-	£6,269
Miscellaneous	£102	-
Donations	£6,444	£233
loan repayment from 17th SWC	-	£2,000
Sub total	£6,546	£8,787
Investment income		
Bank interest	£1,327	£659
Sub total	£1,327	£659
Total Gross Income	£27,710	£31,773
Asset and investment sales, etc.	-	-
Total receipts	£27,710	£31,773

Receipts and payments

	2025	2024
Payments		
Activities		
Beavers	£60	£173
Cubs	£105	£2,904
Scouts	-	-
Explorers	£199	£105
Young leaders	£231	£226
Leaders	£246	£68
District youth forum	£295	£179
District events, activities, training and camps	£5,544	£650
Swimming Club	£2,577	£2,686
Sub total	£9,257	£6,991
District running costs		
Water and Sewerage	£473	£315
Electricity and Gas	£443	£636
Insurance	£6,183	£8,176
Accountancy	£335	£330
Bank charges	£293	£287
AGM and trustee expenses	£703	£1,649
MPLC (film licence)	£693	£692
Lottery licence	£20	-
MiFi	£207	£189
Websites	£158	£991
Miscellaneous	£679	-
First Aid	£1,219	£623
Sub total	£11,406	£13,888
Exceptional expenses		
Donation to Guides	£0	£800
Donations	£325	£500
Gang Show	£680	£5,454
Consultancy fees	£900	£0
Payment on behalf of 18th SWC	£750	£463
Squirrel grants	£0	£600
Sub total	£2,655	£7,817
Total Gross Expenditure	£23,318	£28,771
Total payments	£23,318	£28,771
Net of receipts/(payments)	£4,392	£3,002
Cash funds last year end	£93,181	£90,178
Cash funds this year end	£97,572	£93,181

Activity Accounts

Section	Receipts	Payments	Opening balance	Closing balance
Milldale	£76,887	£61,193	£64,687	£80,380
Canoe and Kayak	£1,931	£1,126	£5,964	£6,769
Sailing	£1,780	£1,736	£5,976	£6,020
Climbing & Hillwalking	£945	£607	£437	£775
Shooting	£20,662	£23,673	£7,886	£4,875
Scout Shop	£36,353	£35,964	£16,929	£17,318
Explorers	£34,362	£38,620	£13,825	£9,568
Gang Show	£25,574	£16,777	£12,760	£21,557

Statement of assets and liabilities at the end of the year

	31/12/25	31/12/24
	£	£
Cash funds		
RBS current account	**£13,369**	**£10,304**
RBS Business Reserve	**£15,232**	**£15,064**
RBS Liquidity 95	**£20,911**	**£20,229**
NS&I investment account	**£48,060**	**£47,583**
Total cash funds	**£97,572**	**£93,181**
Non monetary assets for charity's own use (insured values)		
Land and buildings	**£573,221**	**£560,018**
Motor vehicles	**£33,248**	**£25,950**
Scouting equipment, furniture etc	**£156,649**	**£150,684**
Marine	**£50,810**	**£50,810**
Sub total	**£813,928**	**£787,462**

The above receipts and payments account and statement of assets and liabilities were approved by the Trustees on 2nd March 2026 and signed on their behalf by

Signature	Print Name	
	Jane Smart	Chair
	Richard Bennett	Treasurer

CHARITY COMMISSION FOR ENGLAND AND WALES

Independent examiner's report on the accounts

Section A Independent Examiner's Report

Report to the trustees/ members of

Charity Name: SOUTH WEST CHESHIRE DISTRICT SCOUT COUNCIL

On accounts for the year ended: 31st DECEMBER 2025

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: D Taylor **Date:** 10 Sept 2026

Name: DAVID TAYLOR

Relevant professional qualification(s) or body: INSTITUTE OF CHARTERED ACCOUNTANTS IN ENGLAND AND WALES

(if any):	
Address:	64 LEWIN STREET
	MIDDLEWICH
	CHESHIRE CW10 9AS

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.