

109th Leicester (Countesthorpe) St. Andrews Scout Council

Annual General Meeting

7.00pm on Wednesday 26th June 2024

1. Introduction & Welcome

Louise Topley (Group Chair) opened the meeting and thanked everyone for attending, with an acknowledgment that Daniel was acting as an Observer, given as a Young Leader he is registered with the District not Group.

Present;

Louise Topley (Group Chair)	Alex Denton-Kamuti
John Cook (Trustee)	Benjamin Pilling
Abbie Hunter (Trustee)	Daniel Cosby (Observer)
Jack Barber (Group Lead Volunteer & Trustee)	Jordan Hunter
Malc Barber (Trustee)	Holly Lawrence
Catriona Phillips (Trustee)	James Henson
Nick Topley (Group Treasurer & Trustee)	Jamie Beeby
Matt Riley (Trustee)	Ellena Holdridge
Lucy Freeman (Trustee)	Jill Barber
Clara Smith (Trustee)	Tom Hill
Leanne Upton	
Charlie Wilson	
Marianne Berry	
Elizabeth Henson	
Rob Row	
Kieran Gradden	
Hadley Fox	

2. Apologies For Absence

Nailini Appadoo	Barbara Boyer
Rachel Manton	Andrew Scott
Sophie	Susan Jelves
Kathryn Cook	Mel Blake
Joanne Hamman	Lawrence Hazel
Emma Sperry	Laura Christie-Hall
Rome Sperry	
Marketa Overton	
Mr. Overton	

3.

a) **Approval of The Previous Minutes**

LT proposed that the minutes of the previous AGM held on 5th July 2023 be approved as an accurate and true record of that meeting. The proposal was seconded by John Cook and the motion passed.

b) **Adoption of the Group Constitution**

Louise Topley proposed that the new Group Constitution be adopted and asked for any comments. There were no comments and the new constitution was unanimously adopted.

c) Louise Topley asked Council members to note that the charity's financial year runs from 1st March to 29th February.

d) **Agree the Numbers Appointed to the Trustee Board**

Louise Topley stated that the outgoing Trustee Board recommends that 12 people be appointed to the Trustee Board and proposed that the Council approves that recommendation. This was passed unanimously by a show of hands.

e) **Agree Quorum for future AGMs**

Louise Topley stated that the outgoing Trustee Board would recommend the quorum to be set at 'more than half of the outgoing Trustee Board plus 5 members' and proposed that the Council approves that recommendation. This was passed unanimously by a show of hands.

4. **Review of the Previous Year**

Chair's Report – Louise Topley

I am now in my third year as Chair for the Trustee Board. We have had another great year within Countesthorpe Scouts Group. We have now embedded the new structure of the Trustee Board which is currently working well. I am pleased that most of the Trustees have agreed to stay on the Board to support us moving forward into the next year. The Trustee Board has remained stable with all posts covered and bi-monthly meetings being well attended, allowing us to continue to make positive decisions about the group and the way in which things are run. This year we have lost Liz from the Trustee Board, and also as a leader for the Cubs Tuesday group. I would like to say a huge thank you for all the support that she has given to the Group over the years, both as part of the Trustee Board and also as a leader. James has stepped down as Deputy Lead Volunteer, however we are pleased that James has remained as part of the group as a leader.

The Group has continued to grow in numbers, with now 146 young people at the last census, across the 4 sections. However, we have continued to grow and, as of today, we now 164 young people. This has meant that we have been able to continue to offer all of the young people involved lots of amazing opportunities in Scouting. We now have 2 new Squirrel dreys who have been welcomed into Countesthorpe Scouts. They have both been a huge success due to the support of the leaders who have been part of setting this up, and continue to run the groups on a weekly basis.

We continue to keep a hold on any new works to the hut as a result of ongoing complications with the ceiling which we are currently addressing. We have felt that until this resolved we are unable to carry out any other work that we would like to as this may have an impact on other areas. We will endeavour to get this situation resolved as soon as possible so that we can continue with the plans that we have for the hut in the future. However, we have been able to do some work around the back of the hut to make this more user friendly. Coat hooks have been added to the foyer and we have been able to clear out the back rooms. We have also been able to buy some new chairs which I was very happy about, as the old ones were looking a bit worse for wear.

We have been able to continue doing what Scouting does best, meeting up and having lots of fun and providing opportunities for all of the young people involved. We have been able to offer a wide range of activities for all involved, which you will hear more about through the course of this meeting. The Trustee Board have continued to ensure that all Health & Safety standards are adhered to in the hut, and also supported the sections to be able to run with this all in place as required. We have been able to continue to hire out the hut and we have retained some regular hirers which supports us with the ongoing hut costs. Lucy has very kindly been managing this for us and communicating with hirers to keep things running smoothly – thanks Lucy.

Unfortunately the Bonfire celebrations at Cherry Lane Garden Centre did not go ahead as planned this year, but they still very kindly gave us a generous donation of £2,500.00, for which we offer them our heartfelt thanks. The gala is planned for 6th July 2024 and will hopefully raise more funds for the Group to allow us to bring more opportunities for our young people.

The pantomime Aladdin at the Sue Townsend Theatre, and all the young people involved, was superb and won an award for Youth Pantomime of the Year for the 2nd year running, with some of the young people being nominated for and winning individual awards too. This is a great achievement for all involved. The fair outside was again very successful in raising extra funds for the group, and we look forward to this going over 2 days again later this year as we bring the 'Pantomime With No Name'.

We would like to thank you for your continued contribution with payment of subs during these hard times. Please remember that we do have a hardship policy that can support any families in need of extra help in paying to be part of Scouting. I want to take this opportunity to thank all of our volunteers, who have increased in number again this year. They have continued to support us throughout the year to provide amazing opportunities for the young people involved in the group. Personally, me and my family had a very tough year last year, and being part of the Scouting community really helped us all through the tough times. I do want to say a huge thank you to everyone who supported us. It brings us all so much joy to be part of Scouts and we all as a family get so much out of it. So please do consider joining us if you feel that you have something to offer. There are lots of jobs, big and small, and all of us working together as a team make Countesthorpe Scouts what it is today.

Louise Topley then presented Liz Henson with a gift with thanks from the Group for her involvement in the group as she steps down.

Group Lead Volunteer's Report – Jack Barber

Jack Barber invited 2 young people – Scout Patrol Leaders, Hadley and Alex – to report on the past year. They highlighted a number of amazing opportunities that they had been involved in, including the pantomime and group trips. Both talked about how supported they felt being part of the Scouting family in Countesthorpe and how valuable this was to them. Jack Barber thanked them.

This year has once again been one of huge success, during which the Group has continued to grow. As Lou mentioned, our numbers of young people are fantastic, bigger than the Group has ever been in its 63 year history, and with around 50 regular volunteers now supporting our sections and Trustee Board. We are one of the 5 biggest groups in the County, and have quite rightly gained a reputation as an active and successful group that people want to be a part of. Our profile in the local community is more positive than ever. We are known across the County as a group to look to for inspiration, ideas and support. I am so proud of how our group has progressed in the 4 year, to the day, since I have been in this role. Our success is testament to the efforts of the whole team, working towards our vision. In my other Scouting role I regularly get asked how I did it and the answer is very simple – I didn't. A team of amazing people all pulling together in the same direction means that we continue to hit our goals, serve our young members and truly thrive, and we're not finished yet.

It is a huge privilege to be able to lead such an amazing set of volunteers who do so much to give fantastic opportunities and skills for life to our young people.

The Headlines

- Opening Squirrels for the first time
- A record-breaking gala
- A stunning panto with a flying carpet which we somehow managed to keep a secret from all of you
- A Group camp at Willesley for more than 80 young people
- 4th place finishes for our Scouts in Rambling Fox and Border Hike
- Supporting our local community, including during the Coronation celebrations
- And so much more

But perhaps more important than those headlines are the individual stories and the difference that we make to young people's lives. Be that an incredible Aladdin who 12 months earlier had told me that they would never be able to speak or sing on stage. Or a Beaver staying away from home for the very first time on camp. Or a young person beating their fears to have a go on a climbing wall, or even just turning up and making it through a meeting. Perhaps more than ever this year I have been aware of some amazing stories of how Scouting has improved the lives of our young people, and to all those who achieved their personal challenges this year, a huge well done.

We have also seen several of our volunteers develop their skills over the year, including Ellena and Tom earning Campsite Nights Away permits, Abbie earning an indoor permit 8 days after the reporting period, Jamie completing his wood beads and several leaders working towards these.

I have to just touch on Squirrels, which opened with a bang on a Thursday in September. Our 2nd drey opened after this reporting period closed and so I can't talk about it yet, but both

groups have been a huge success. A huge thank you to Abbie for setting up the 1st drey and acting as a real trailblazer for Squirrel dreys everywhere for their ambitious programme of activities.

This brings me on to one of the Group's biggest challenges, a waiting list of well over 50 young people across Squirrels and Beavers. Whilst our success has increased interest and this is a fantastic problem to have, it is posing a challenge to us. We have no plans at present to open a 3rd drey or colony as this is realistically not sustainable given current building availability, and so we are actively working with other groups locally to try and enable as many of these young people as possible to enjoy Scouting.

As mentioned by Louise, the state of our ceiling following the flawed works carried out in 2021 remains our biggest source of frustration. I can reassure everyone that the expert advice we have received states that the building remains perfectly safe in the short and medium term, and I am also pleased to say that the legal case is progressing positively. We are hopeful of seeing tangible progress on this over the summer, The Trustee Board will continue to defend the Group's position here, with the support of a County Trustee who has expertise in this area. Meanwhile, other hut developments remain on hold but we hope for a resolution in this soon.

As ever, we have had some changeover in our volunteers this year, with Cat taking over from Ross as Monday Cubs leader, although Ross continues to support the section each week. With their combined forces and skills, the pack is really thriving and I would like to thank both of them for how this has been managed. As mentioned, Liz has also moved on from the Group recently and we are now actively recruiting to find more volunteers to support our Tuesday Cubs section. While we are currently covering this across the rest of the group and there is no risk of closure, we do really want to encourage some new adults to join this pack to allow it to continue to grow and to support the other team members. James continues as Team Leader and will be known as Akela from September, but we would really welcome some extra resource here. So if you, or anyone you know, would be interested, whatever commitment you can give, please do get in touch.

Firstly though I would like to take a moment to thank Liz for the 8 years that she has given to the Group, not only in Cubs but also in supporting camps, events, pantos, covering other sections and so much more. Liz remains a friend of the Group and will always be welcome when her circumstances allow. Liz, we do have a little Thank You for you from all of the Cubs.

We have also gained so many volunteers across the reporting year, predominantly in Squirrels of course but also across the older sections. A huge welcome to you all in what I hope will be the start of a long journey in Scouting. Of course we will never stand still and we are always looking for more volunteers in every role and commitment level. Whatever time you can give, you make a difference to our young people and we would love to welcome you aboard. There is always so much going on each week that it is impossible to keep track of it all. Thank you to our young people who come along each week ready to try something new, have fun and learn new skills. You are the reason that our group is here and the reason we enjoy our Scouting so much. To all those who have supported the Group in the past year as a volunteer, whatever it is that you do, thank you so much. I hope that you all enjoy it as much as I do. One of my Scout Leaders once told me that Scouting is like a snowball, as soon as you have made it you want to roll it a bit bigger, then a bit bigger, then a bit bigger, then suddenly you have a massive ball and nothing can stop it as it runs down the hill. That has never been

more true than in our Group. The things that we achieve never cease to amaze me. Our volunteers continue to drive each other on, and inspire me every week with their enthusiasm, and work towards our vision every day. Please accept this as my annual report.

Squirrels Report – Abbie Hunter

What a year for our first Squirrel Drey! We successfully opened our Squirrel Drey in September 2023 after much planning. I would like to thank James and Jack for all their hard work planning which enabled the opening to go smoothly. We initially opened our drey with 14 Squirrels and many helpers. This has now grown to 18 Squirrels and many more helpers. I would like to express my gratitude to all those who have helped with Squirrels – regular leaders, parents and other section leaders who we have been able to rely on for advice and assistance. We have had so much fun watching our Squirrels learn and grow, and we have developed our programme alongside this. We have enjoyed going on lots of adventures, from bug-hunting to having bonfires and building dens. We have learnt new games and had fun playing both at the hut and the paddock and expressed ourselves through arts & crafts. We have learnt so much about each other through our Talent Show and storytime. We have also learnt about the world around us through planting seeds, learning about different foods and countries, and celebrating with parties at Halloween and Christmas. We have also enjoyed learning from our older Scouting family and Young Leaders, and I know our Squirrels cannot wait to progress through Beavers, Cubs and Scouts. Personally I look forward to continuing as Thursday Squirrels leader and as a Trustee, and the fun I know we have planned for this next year.

Beavers Report – Jack Barber

This has been another great year for Countesthorpe Beavers, with lots of skill learnt, fun had and Bronze Awards achieved. In January, in a failed attempt to deal with the new Squirrel influx moving up, plus the existing waiting list, both colonies expanded to 24 Beavers with a great leadership team in both sections. Highlights of the year included our trip to Conkers in June, where we went in the water park, explored the trails and of course went on the train. We also had a great time at the Beavers Sleepover in September, joining Beavers from across the District for a weekend of fun. As well as participating in all of the Group events which you have already heard mentioned this evening. The weekly programme, included a visit to the fire station and sitting in the fire engine, supporting with the village coronation celebrations, and supporting the village Library as part of our Community impact badges, a chip shop walk, water fight, trip to Laserquest, a popular evening spent making slime, Crazy Golf, a nature fashion show where we made dresses and shirts from leaves and twigs, a visit from some of those who attended the World Scout Jamboree, learning sign language, playing dark games at the campsite, making bird-feeders, and earning badges such as Space, Global Issues, Air Activities and more.

One thing that I really want to highlight is our fantastic group of Young Leaders, 3 in each colony, who make such a difference to our meetings, are loved by all the Beavers, and who this year have begun to take a leading role in planning and running our sessions. Some of them have planned and delivered entire meetings at the end of 2023 and early part of 2024

and have continued to do so. You are a real asset to the Group and do a fantastic job – you are the future and it looks amazing.

Our meetings are, as ever, very well attended and as mentioned we do unfortunately have a long waiting list at the moment, which continues to be a challenge for us but a nice one to have. We have also seen some changeover in leaders across the year, with James stepping back to focus on Cubs. The team remains strong though with a planned reorganisation from September meaning that myself, Ellen and Jill will be Team Leaders for both groups, supported by Sarah, Caroline and Andy on Tuesdays, and Jackie, Susan and Mel on Wednesdays. Huge thank you to everyone who has supported Beavers this year and as always, we look forward to much more fun to come.

Monday Cubs Report – Catriona Phillips

We started the year with a bang by starting work towards our Science badge. The Cubs loved doing the experiments, and building the volcano was definitely one of their favourites. But when it came to making their own ice cream, the Cubs soon learnt that if the salt needed to set the ice cream got into the ice cream mix then it did not taste so great (not that it stopped any of them trying it!). Throughout the year the Cubs have learnt about different countries and cultures; we celebrated Australia Day with kangaroos, koalas and fairy bread. We held our own Athletics night inside the hut with long jump, assisted blindfold racing and skipping and throwing. This was the week when we persuaded Karen to join our team. Karen, new to Cubs, took the skipping challenge on literally and skipped the whole night. She looked exhausted by the end of it, and I worried we had broken her, but she came back for more. We have had a Halloween party, cooked pancakes and held a Christmas party. We have held a fashion show using recycling, which was fantastic to see all the Cubs really getting into it and strutting their stuff down the runway at the end.

During the year the Cubs have also done Arts & Crafts, such as firework rockets, Aladdin magnets, Diwali lights, Christmas baubles and Easter windchimes. We have been out and about and taken part with rugby fun at Leicester Lions, zapped each other at Laserforce, visited the Black Country Museum, made a splash at an inflatable water assault course, learnt how to use a hose at the fire station, been on a night walk and done some bell-ringing at the church, which I see on Facebook confused some of the Residents.

4 of our Cubs planned their own nights and took over, making pizza, playing crab football, making paper aeroplanes which they all enjoyed. However, I did hear comments from the leading Cubs such as ‘the Cubs are too noisy’ and ‘the Cubs are not listening to us’. Welcome to our world Cubs!

At present the Cubs are working on their Community Badge. They decided to support the Next Chapter Horse Rescue and we have been down to visit the horses. The Cubs are doing a cake sale to raise funds throughout this week and next so please do support them.

We started the year with 22 Cubs and we now have 27. Altogether the Cubs have earned a massive 236 badges between them, with 2 of those being Chief Silver Awards and another 2 about to get theirs. It is my first year as Cub Team Leader and I will admit that it has been harder work than I thought, especially when Jack put anyone with any kind of allergy in my

group. But I have a fantastic team and supportive parents to who I would like to say a huge thank you. But I have had a lot of fun and I look forward to doing it all again next year.

Scouts Report – Matt Riley & Tom Hill

Thursday evening Scouts has continued to grow in both Scouts and leaders (always looking for more help though!). Numbers have remained relatively steady, with new Scouts joining to replace those that have left due to other commitments and the 5 Scouts who have moved on to Explorers. This has meant that we continue to have 30+ Scouts. Volunteer-wise, we have seen the core team – Gareth, Jordan, Lawrence, Matt, Scotty and Tom – joined by Marianna and Shona joining the team with Rupert providing valuable support as a Young Leader, alongside a number of more casual helpers who have helped out through the year. Tom and Matt continue to act as Lead Volunteers, with Tom's Scouting skills working well alongside Matt's Dadmin skills. Thank you to all those who continue to help, be it for one evening, every evening, at camp or an activity, as without your help and input we would not be able to run the varied programme that we do.

Due to the number of Scouts we have continued to split evenings between the hut and the Bridge, particularly over the winter, with everyone returning to the hut for flag break. We acknowledge that Patrols may not always mean that Scouts are with their friends, but part of the joy of Scouting is to make new friends and to get to know other people. However, we have reduced the number of Patrols from 6 to 4 to try to ensure that existing friendship groups can continue. Big thanks to the Scouts and parents for keeping up with the changes in venue and making sure that everyone is dropped off, and more importantly collected from, the right place.

Turning to particular events that have taken place during the period, we have been able to run a varied programme from fires and whittling, to trebuchet making on what may have been too large a scale (which we learnt from for this year), coupled with more theory-based elements such as first aid and morse code / semaphore / disability awareness. We have tried to get a number of outside speakers in over the year to highlight to the Scouts different skills. This year we have had talks from an international wheelchair rugby player in May, and a Makaton session in February 2024, where the Scouts discovered that only being able to communicate with sign language can mean that what you are trying to say might have a very different meaning! We will try to get more such talks in place over the next year.

The Scouts represented the Group at a number of events during the period, including at the Jubilee, Remembrance Sunday, the Gala, the Carol Concert in December, and at Active Arts where again a number of positive comments were received from stall holders about how helpful the Scouts have been. The Scouts decided to put the money raised from helping at Active Arts to having an overnight camp at Ullesthorpe the night before helping out at the work weekend the following Saturday where buildings were painted, the site was generally tidied, and we may have unwittingly blocked the drain that we were meant to be clearing (the least said about that the better!).

As part of the Remembrance preparation, a large group of Scouts attended the New Walk museum on the Saturday before Remembrance Sunday to try to bring to life what those who fought in the 2 World Wars experienced. Behaviour was impeccable, and hopefully this was a useful addition to the programme.

Scouts have taken part in a number of outdoor events over the period, including a St. George's Day camp, Rambling Fox, and a good number of Scouts were able to go sailing. We again ran the expedition hike, and had 3 teams head up to Derbyshire to enter the Borderhike (just don't mention the result). Thanks again to the Leire & Dunton team for both the expedition and Borderhike.

The Group camp at Willesley was well-attended, with zip-line and biking among a number of activities held, with the Scouts all still very keen to help out with the Campfire skits. Congratulations to Tom for earning his camp permit at the 2023 camp. The Sunday morning di detach us that a frisbee in a tree is fascinating to scouts and can easily fill an hour of downtime. Thanks again to all those who have and continue to support the Scouts, be that volunteers, parents or outside helpers that help us provide a varied and enjoyable programme. Let's see what this year brings!

We confirm that we are happy to confirm that we are happy to continue with our roles on the Trustee Board and as Scout Lead Volunteers for the forthcoming year.

Louise Topley thanked everyone for providing their reports.

b) Receive & Consider the Annual Report of the Group Trustee Board, including the Statement of Accounts

Treasurer's Report – Nick Topley

As you can see from the Accounts circulated, we have had another busy year. Adding new members, as well as a whole new Squirrels section, has led us to become one of the largest groups in the District, with a total income from subs of £11,101.60. This has led to a total capitation (the amount paid to District, County and National Scouting for each young person on our books) for 2023/24 at £52.50 per person, of £6668.80. This is all despite the fact that, for the 6th year running, we have maintained the price of subs, making us the cheapest in the District.

We have run the usual mix of activities for all sections, including an amazing Group trip to London, various camps and sleepovers, and our Group camp at Willesley. Total income from activities has been £18, 101.10.

The Group has subsidised several activities this year, the most notable being the panto, which cost roughly £800.00, despite record ticket sales. This meant that total outlay for trips and activities was £20,433. 30.

There has been no significant outlay for hut maintenance, mainly due to the ongoing issues that we are having with the ceiling. However the Group have purchased some new equipment, including some new tents.

The Group also had a successful year of fundraising, with record returns from the Gala and a generous donation from Cherry Lane Garden Centre, despite the last minute cancellation of the fireworks display. In total we have raised £8,237.48, with an additional £2,170.90 from GiftAid. With the addition of other, we have had a total income of £43, 404.44. The additional £10,001 shown is an internal transfer between our old current account to our new current account.

With expenditure increased for items such as insurance and utilities, as well as the associated expenditure for capitation and activities, we have total outgoings of £41,440.86. This has led to an overall profit for the year of £1,963.58, which is absolutely fantastic and allows the Group to remain financially healthy and also allows us significant freedom and creativity in the number and type of trips and activities that we can provide.

There were no questions regarding the accounts or the report.

5. Making Appointments

Louise Topley handed over control of the meeting to Jack Barber.

a) Group Chair

Jack Barber explained that the Trustee Board, as a result of the open selection process followed, recommends that Louise Topley be re-appointed as Group Chair for another 3 year term. This proposal was passed unanimously by a show of hands.

Louise Topley therefore took back control of the meeting.

b) Group Treasurer

Louise Topley explained that the Trustee Board, as a result of the open selection process followed, recommends that Nick Topley be re-appointed as Group Treasurer for another 2-year term. This proposal was passed unanimously by a show of hands.

c) Trustee Board Members

Louise Topley explained that the Trustee Board, as a result of the open selection process, no elections were required and that the Board be re-appointed as is for another year, with the exception that Ross Lyon be a co-opted member of the Trustee Board until such a time as the ceiling situation is resolved. This proposal was passed unanimously by a show of hands.

d) Independent Examiner

Nick Topley as Group Treasurer proposed that Karen Linnett be appointed as the Independent Examiner. Louise Topley confirmed that this has been proposed, seconded and that she is qualified for the role. The appointment was passed unanimously with a show of hands.

Louise Topley closed the meeting by thanking everyone for attending and inviting all to remain for refreshments.

Independent examiner's report to the trustees of 109th Countesthorpe Scout Group.

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of the 109th Countesthorpe Scout Group for the year ended 28th February 2024.

Responsibilities and basis of report

As the charity trustees of the 109th Countesthorpe Scout Group 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 109th Countesthorpe Scout Group 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

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no material matters have come to my attention in connection with the examination giving me cause to believe that in any material respect:

1. accounting records were not kept in respect of the 109th Countesthorpe Scout Group as required by section 130 of the Act; or
2. the accounts do not accord with those records.

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.

Signed:



Name: Karen Linnett

Relevant professional qualification or membership of professional bodies (if any): Fellow member of ACCA

Address: 4 Archery Close, Countesthorpe, Leicester, LE8 5QB

Date: 24.6.24