

81st Belfast (St. Bartholomew's) Scout Group

Registered with the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland – NIC 103875

TRUSTEES' ANNUAL REPORT for the year 1st April 2023 – 31st March 2024

ADDRESS

Saint Bartholomew's Church, 183 Stranmillis Road, Belfast BT9 5EE

81scoutgroup@gmail.com

TRUSTEE BOARD at 31st March 2024

Neil McDowell (Chair), James Davis (Treasurer)

Anita McCann, Sarah McBurney, Philip Hall

Ian Berryman – Group Lead Volunteer (Ex Officio)

STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

The Group's governing documents are those of The Scout Association. They consist of a Royal Charter, which in turn gives authority to the Bye Laws of the Association and The Policy, Organisation and Rules of The Scout Association. The Group is a trust established under its rules which are common to all Scouts. The Trustees are appointed in accordance with the Policy, Organisation and Rules of The Scout Association. The Group is managed by the Group Trustee Board, members of which are the 'Charity Trustees' of the Scout Group which is an educational charity. As charity trustees they are responsible for complying with legislation applicable to charities. This includes the registration, keeping proper accounts and making returns to the Charity Commission as appropriate. The Trustee Board consists of the Chair, Treasurer and four Trustees including one Ex Officio and meets at regular intervals. Members of the Trustee Board complete Being a Scouts Trustee learning within the first six months of joining the Board.

This Group Trustee Board exists to make sure the charity is well-managed, risks are assessed and mitigated, buildings and equipment are in good working order, and everyone follows legal requirements and the organisation's policies and rules. Their support helps other volunteers run high-quality and safe programmes that gives young people skills for life.

The Group has in place systems of internal controls that are designed to provide reasonable assurance against material mismanagement or loss, these include 2 signatories for all payments and comprehensive insurance policies to ensure that insurable risks are covered.

The Group Trustee Board has identified major risks to which they believe the Group is exposed, these have been reviewed and systems have been established to mitigate against them. The main areas of concern that have been identified are:

Damage to equipment. The Group has sufficient contents insurance to mitigate against permanent loss.

Injury to Leaders, helpers, supporters and members. The Group, through the capitation fees, contributes to The Scout Association's national accident insurance policy. The Group also has additional insurance for non-members. Risk Assessments are undertaken before all activities.

Reduced income from fundraising. The Group is primarily reliant upon income from subscriptions and fundraising. The Group does hold a reserve to ensure the continuity of activities should there be a major reduction in income. The Board could raise the value of subscriptions to increase the income to the Group on an ongoing basis either temporarily or permanently.

Reduction or loss of leaders. The Group is totally reliant upon volunteers to run and administer the activities of the Group. If there was a reduction in the number of leaders to an unacceptable level in a particular section or the Group as a whole then the Group would undertake a recruitment project before considering contraction or closure of the section or, in the worst-case scenario, the complete closure of the Group.

Reduction or loss of members. The Group provides activities for all young people aged 4 – 14 and supports an Explorer Unit for 14 - 18. If there was a reduction in membership in a particular Section or the Group as a whole, a similar undertaking would be put in place as outlined above.

OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES

The Purpose of Scouting

Scouting exists to actively engage and support young people in their personal development, empowering them to make a positive contribution to society.

The Values of Scouting

As Scouts we are guided by these values:

Integrity – We act with integrity; we are honest, trustworthy and loyal.

Respect – We have self-respect and respect for others.

Care – We support others and take care of the world in which we live.

Belief – We explore our faiths, beliefs and attitudes.

Co-operation – We make a positive difference; we co-operate with others and make friends.

The Scout Method

Scouting takes place when young people, in partnership with adults, work together based on the values of Scouting and:

- enjoy what they are doing and have fun
- take part in activities indoors and outdoors
- learn by doing
- share in spiritual reflection
- take responsibility and make choices
- undertake new and challenging activities
- make and live by their Promise.

The 81st Belfast Scout Group are very proud of the young people who have achieved the top awards in their Section – the Chief Scout's Acorn Award for Squirrels, the Chief Scout's Bronze Award for Beavers, the Chief Scout's Silver Award for Cubs and the Chief Scout's Gold Award for Scouts. These awards epitomise The Values of Scouting and The Scout Method.

The Group meets the Charity Commission's public benefit criteria under both the advancement of education and the advancement of citizenship or community development headings.

Sectional Key Activities

- In April 'Red Squirrel' celebrated receiving the Silver Wolf (Scouting's highest award for adult volunteers) at The Scouts' 'Windsor Day of Celebration and Achievement' at Windsor Castle
- In May, a team from the Cub Pack entered the Belfast Cub County Flag Competition and were runners-up in the Cooking Competition for their 'Big Belfast Burgers' and 'Stranmillis Sweet Surprise'
- Beavers enjoyed NI Beaver Scout Rally Day at NI Scout Centre Crawfordsburn in May on a theme of 'Around the World in a Day'
- All Sections celebrated the Coronation of King Charles III and Queen Camilla with lots of 'royal' themed activities. The Squirrels and Beavers enjoyed Jack Russell crafts and treasure trails
- The Beaver Colony visited Sydenham Court, supported housing for people living with dementia, to perform a special Coronation celebration and brought gifts of Coronation cupcakes for the residents
- Adult volunteers took part in the Big Help Out doing a number of litter picks on beaches along the North Coast
- In late May and June all Sections enjoyed outdoor activities at Ardnally Scout Centre, including fire lighting, activity trails and toasting marshmallows. Scouts also helped at the local FoodBank and had a wet and wild time canoeing on the Lagan River
- In June, 'Group' (Group Lead Volunteer) was presented with the Silver Acorn at a ScoutsNI garden party at Ardnally Scout Centre
- At the end of June all Sections enjoyed the Lagan Scout District 5-year celebrations at Ardnally Scout Centre with a Squirrel Drey event and activity camp for older sections
- During the summer months two Explorer Scouts and one Leader who was part of the International Service Team attended the 25th World Scout Jamboree (WSJ) in South Korea. In September, Scout Group parents, family and friends along with representatives of Lagan Scout District, Belfast Scout County and the Fountainville Scout Development Trust were invited to a presentation on the WSJ followed by refreshments
- In September Squirrels, Beavers and Cubs enjoyed a month of pirate themed activities culminating in a Family Fancy Dress Pirate evening of fun and games in the Church Hall

- Scouts bivouacked at Ardnally Scout Centre during their Survival Camp and worked on their Survival Skills Activity Badge learning about emergency First Aid, International Distress Signals, back woods cooking, firelighting, knots and axe and saw safety. Sadly, in November we said 'goodbye' to Sam, our Scout Leader, who moved back to England
- October saw Squirrels having a fancy dress Hallowe'en party while Beavers and Cubs held a 'Light Party' celebrating different faiths on the theme of 'light'
- Also in October, Beavers attended a Lagan 'bat' themed Hallowe'en event at Ardnally Scout Centre
- In November, the Scouts enjoyed a visit to the Indian Community Centre at Carlisle Circus, Belfast
- Also in November, Beavers raised funds for the Alzheimer's Society by cycling, scootering, and go-carting around the Church to represent 20,000 miles for the 20,000 people living with Dementia in Northern Ireland
- Getting in the mood for Christmas and thinking of others, the Squirrels, Beavers and Cubs had a fantastic time doing archery, crate-climbing and nature activities during their Elf Party at NI Scout Centre Crawfordsburn raising funds for Dementia NI
- In December Squirrels & Beavers attended Lagan Scout District's 'Christmas @ Elfnally' event at Ardnally Scout Centre and enjoyed an 81st 'Winter Wonderland' in Saint Bartholomew's Church grounds
- Squirrels and Beavers made Christmas crafts and cards for the elderly in Saint Bartholomew's Church and Sydenham Court, supported housing for people living with Dementia. At Saint Bartholomew's Christmas Fayre, craft items made by Squirrels, Beavers and Cubs were on sale along with candy floss and activities for young and old to enjoy
- The Cub Pack celebrated Burns Night and a collection of Ulster Scots activities
- Spring saw Squirrels and Beavers celebrating Chinese New Year, Mardi Gras, Holi, International Pizza Day and World Book Day
- Having won the Lagan District quiz, a team of Cubs took part in the NI Cub Quiz held in Magherafelt and enjoyed meeting Packs from all over NI
- Residential experiences are an important part of Scouting, and the Beavers held an indoor sleepover in the Church Hall in February while in March, Cubs and Scouts had a camp at NI Scout Centre Crawfordsburn
- Throughout the year all Sections have been involved in looking after the environment through their programme activities. The Beavers took part in the Big Plastic Count recording how much plastic their families used and looking at ways to reduce, reuse and recycle. The Squirrel Drey took part in a Scout Association pilot of the Earth Tribe Award.
- Sections have also learned to look after their physical and mental wellbeing and have enjoyed healthy eating and exercise programmes, mindfulness and relaxation techniques, anger management strategies and yoga
- The 81st Scout Group supports the Lagan Scout District Stranmillis Explorer Unit, and the young people aged 14 – 18 have taken part in creating FoodBank meals, visiting Sydenham Court – supported housing for people living with dementia, baking biscuits for Saint Bartholomew's lunch club for the elderly, team challenges, table tennis tournaments and a visit to Boulderworld
- All Sections have been working towards their Chief Scout's top awards.
- All Sections are involved in donating non-perishable food items, toiletries, and basic cleaning products to a monthly collection for the FoodBank.
- The 81st Belfast Scout Group is grateful for the immense contribution made by volunteers in planning, organising and running programmes, events and camps. The Group also acknowledges the support of parents and carers.
- The 81st Belfast Scout Group is extremely grateful to the Fountainville Scout Development Trust for its continued financial support enabling the Scout Group to offer exciting activities, outdoor opportunities, and life skills to the young people.
- The 81st Belfast Scout Group thanks the Rector and Select Vestry of Saint Bartholomew's Parish Church for their support and use of Church buildings and grounds and to the EA for continued funding.

The Group's policy on reserves is to hold sufficient resources to continue the charitable activities of the Group should income and fundraising activities fall short and to support young people and adult volunteers to avail of international opportunities, such World Scout Jamborees and International Camps. The Group does not have sufficient funds to invest in longer-term investments such as stocks and shares. All funds are held in cash using only a mainstream bank.

The Trustees declare that they have approved the Trustees' report above

Signed on behalf of the charity's Trustees

Signature *APN Mc Dowell*

Full name *ALAN PERRY NEIL MCDOWELL*

Position *CHAIR*

Date *27/8/2024*