



CC County Londonderry Report 2022 -2023

This report refers to the period 1st April 2022 – 31st March 2023

ADMINISTRATION AND TRUSTEES

The County Londonderry Scout Council is a Charity which has management responsibility for all young people and volunteers involved in the 14 Scout Groups and independent sections in the Londonderry Scout County. The Scout County is larger than the Geographical County and has groups that operate in North Antrim and County Tyrone. The County Scout Council consists of approximately 758 Young people between 4 and 18 years old and 208 adult volunteers.

The current trustees of the Charity are	Trevor Blair	Jean Major
	Richard Edgar	Joy Greer
	Paul Meikle	Adam Meikle

MEMBERSHIP

Amidst the ongoing challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic and the established traffic light system, our County members eagerly embraced the green light at the start of this annual reporting period of April 1, 2022. This pivotal signal marked the resumption of all activities, including residentials and international trips for all members.

Despite the favourable change, we were directed to continue wearing face coverings until 25th April when indoors. Some members opted to continue wearing face coverings for slightly longer in Group settings, as some of our volunteers had vulnerable individuals at homes or in their families. The commitment to health and safety persisted, with Groups continuing to use hand sanitizer and adhering to good hygiene practices when sharing equipment, thereby minimizing the risk of illness transmission.

Throughout this period, the youth membership for the County remained steady, ensuring that young members continued to benefit from the incredible Scouting opportunities and activities offered. However, a notable shift occurred in adult membership, with a reduction of 35 adult volunteers—equating to approximately a 15% reduction. Subsequently, our volunteers found themselves navigating the challenge of maintaining the same exceptional





level of Scouting experiences for our youth members with a significantly diminished adult leadership team

Regrettably, certain Scout Groups, such as those in Ballintoy and Dunseverick, Eglinton, and Aghadowey, were unable to meet, thereby hindering the provision of youth activities in those areas. Additionally, Desertcreat Scout Group, facing previous meeting difficulties, made the difficult decision to close its doors.

On a brighter note, the resilience of Scouting emerged in Ballycastle, where a renewed youth provision took shape. Operating Beavers and Cubs sections, the Group hopes to attract older siblings to the Scout section, setting the stage for future growth and engagement.

The green light for all activities and residentials, activated on April 1, 2022, prompted numerous Groups in the County to organise day events or shorter residentials for the summer of 2022. This approach accommodated members who remained cautious about potential future restrictions or lacked the resources for extended overnight residentials.

Despite these efforts, the challenges continued for adult leaders who found navigating the restrictions challenging, prompting some deciding not to return. Headquarters, recognising the pivotal role of training in ensuring a safe Scouting environment, directed all members to complete and update their mandatory training. Although most modules are conveniently available online except for the first aid practical, the 90-day timeframe posed a challenge for some members, leading to their decision to step back from their Scouting roles.

MEMBERSHIP IN GROUPS

Group	2023 Membership	
	Youth	Adults
1 st Aghadowey	Not Able to Meet	
Ballintoy & Dunseverick	Not Able to Meet	
Ballycastle	17	7
Ballymoney	86	26
1 st Bovevagh	56	13
1 st Castlerock	84	36
1 st Coleraine	94	23



1 st Cookstown	48	15
Derryloran	60	20
1 st Desertcreat	Closed	
1 st Kildress	19	8
3 rd Londonderry	48	16
6 th Londonderry	Not Able to Meet	
1 st Moyola	12	4
1 st Portstewart	71	15
1 st Roe Valley	18	9
Three Spires	38	8
Woodschapel	20	4
Explorers	62	4
Network	25	
TOTALS	758	208

FINANCES

- 5 Participants from the County attending the World Scout Jamboree to Scout Korea in August 2023 received £500 each towards their trip. The total cost of their trip was £3,000 each. Participants from the County are
 - JOSHUA DRIPPS – UNIT LEADER
 - AMELIE HOLDEN
 - CELIA KERR
 - DANIEL KELSO
 - EUAN ANDERSON
- A rebate from Scout Headquarters for prompt payment of annual membership fees was received for the sum of £355. This payment was used to assist with the £479.53 payment to the Forestry for the lease of camping fees at Downhill Forest for County members.
- Bovevagh’s payment for annual membership fees for 2022 - £1597.50 was received slightly late and shows on this years return.
- Desertcreat Scout Group closed and their total funds of £2,077.48 has been transferred to the County Account.



PROGRAMME

Amidst the ongoing restrictions and the established traffic lights the County members were pleased that the direction for all activities, residentials and international trips were to resume once again.

Although this direction was given on 1st April 2022 many groups used the Easter break to plan their days away or residentials for the up and coming months ahead with the hope of all face coverings being removed after 25th April 2022.

We were also delighted that 7 young people from the County took part in the selection process for the World Scout Jamboree to South Korea and were thrilled that we had 4 young people who were selected to be participants as well as our Youth Commissioner Joshua who was selected to be a unit leader. With these restrictions now relaxing hopefully the young people would be able to expand their fundraising efforts for their WSJ experience.

As the Scouting term concluded in mid-June, county members buzzed with excitement, anticipating a return to a more robust pre-COVID programme. September 2022 marked a fresh restart for scouting in many groups across the County.

Regrettably, September also brought somber news of the passing of our patron, Queen Elizabeth II. As the nation mourned, preparations were underway for the Queen's lying-in-state and funeral. Two outstanding young people, Eve Barrett and Jake Anderson, were nominated to represent the County at the lying-in-state. Their commendable roles included assisting with the queue, distributing water and blankets, and providing assistance to those in need—a unique opportunity to be part of history and a memorable gesture of respect to our patron.

In October, Beavers from across the County embarked on a mud squelching trip to Fulton's Farm for an enchanting day of pumpkin picking, storytelling, singing, and dancing. The muddy escapade included mastering the maize maze and a fun ride on the tractor train, creating lasting memories without a clean wellie in sight.

Come February, County Cubs journeyed to All Saint's Clooney in Londonderry for the eagerly anticipated County Cub Quiz. Witnessing cubs from the County engage in a closely contested competition added to the thrill of the event.

March marked the triumphant return of Duke of Edinburgh expeditions in the County, allowing our older sections to work towards their highest awards. As we approach the end of this reporting year, the County is poised to hold its AGM in January 2024, covering the period from April 2022 to March 2023. Meeting both charity commission and census requirements, the County ensured timely completion and submission, signaling a positive and forward-looking conclusion to this eventful year.



HIGHLIGHTS

- Awards Presentation – 9th April 2022
 - Gavin Beck – Silver Wolf
 - Joy Greer – Bar to the Silver Acorn
 - Richard Edgar – Bar to Silver Acorn
 - Robert Boyd – Silver Acorn
- Leaders Meal – 7th May 2022
- Basecamp Conference – 13th – 15th May 2022
- Queen’s Jubilee Celebrations – 5th June 2022
- Leader First Aid Training - 21st August 2022, Castlerock
- Assistance and Representation from the County for Queen Elizabeth’s Funeral in London – September 2022
 - Eve Barrett and Jake Anderson
- Leader First Aid Training - 4th September 2022, Cookstown
- Representation from the County to meet King Charles II as he visited Belfast - 13th September 2022
 - Trevor Blair and Stephanie Meikle
- Beaver Visit to Fulton’s Pumpkin Patch – 22nd October 2022
- NI Restructure meeting – 23rd Nov 2022
- Youth Awards Presentation – 6th January 2023
 - James Greer – Queen Scout Award
- Leader First Aid Training - 8th January 2023, Derryloran
- County Cub Quiz – 25th February 2023
- DofE Expedition Recommences – March 2023
- Leader First Aid Training – 4th March 2023, Castlerock

CHANGES AHEAD

As the County moves forward together to overcome the challenges of the COVID pandemic, it is heartening to witness hopeful signs of these challenges gradually receding.

Our youth membership has started to recover and it is great to see our young people return and continue in their Scouting. We have challenges ahead with the decrease in adult volunteers but hopefully with a more normalised pre covid programme able to take place we will be able to recruit new adults through various recruitment initiatives.



The County was asked to send some representatives to Manchester in May 2022 to a Scouting conference called Basecamp. This signaled there were changes to Scouting ahead and the County was asked to appoint a Transformation Lead to help the County plan and prepare for these new Changes. Adam Meikle was appointed our County Transformation Lead. Adam along with the County Commissioner – Stephanie Meikle, Youth Commissioner – Joshua Dripps and Deputy Youth Commissioner – Grace Owens travelled to Manchester to hear about the potential new changes in Scouting.

On 23rd November 2022, the Northern Ireland Scout Council held a crucial restructuring meeting in Castlerock, inviting all County leaders to discuss potential alterations to the County and District structure of Scouting in the County. Several proposals were presented, and valuable feedback was collected during the County meeting. Notably, the suggestion to restructure the County along council boundaries faced a firm rejection. Having transitioned to a County District in recent years, our County members expressed a collective desire to maintain the current configuration moving forward.

As we eagerly anticipate the forthcoming changes to our structure in Northern Ireland, along with broader adjustments in Scouting, our County remains committed to supporting and empowering our Groups. Our focus is on facilitating an engaging programme for our youth members and, crucially, recruiting the necessary adult volunteers. The County is currently in a preparatory phase, poised to embrace and navigate the upcoming changes with resilience and adaptability.

Finally, I would like to thank all our leaders, supporters, and families for their efforts in supporting young people to develop through scouting in these difficult and challenging times. The enthusiasm of our young people gives me great hope for the future of Scouting in the County. We have further challenges and changes ahead, but we look forward to meeting them and supporting Scouting for the Young people in our County.

Stephanie

Stephanie Meikle

County Commissioner