

Strangford District Scout Council 23/24 AGM

District Volunteer Lead Report

The 22/23 AGM in November 2023 reported on the fantastic Growth and Support within Strangford District. Since then, the district focus for 23/2024 was to continue to deliver a varied programme, support sections and groups and for our young people to achieve awards and badges.

Nothing changed in relation to reminder emails being sent out to everyone about mandatory training in Safety, Safeguarding and GDPR. Thank you each and everyone for completing this training and ensuring that you are compliant, The compliance figure has been brought down from 12% non-compliant to less than 1%. Please complete this at your earliest convenience. I have already taken the tough decision to suspend leaders and will continue to do so in order to protect you, your GVL, your Group and most importantly our Young People. I would ask that when you get the 90-day reminder that you take action and complete the training as soon as possible so that unnecessary work is not required. Thank you.

If you have any issues with accessing IT please get in touch with Scout headquarters and your GVL.

The January Census for the District was up +4.6% (1200). This was fantastic and showed what a great programme you as leaders are delivering to our young people and providing opportunities that others may not be able to take part in. Census is coming back around in January 2025 and I encourage Group leads to start communicating out to section leads to prepare for the data collection to help with a smooth process.

In February I started the Compass clean up working with Group leads. This process was finished in September before the compass freeze. Over 300 records were looked at in detail to update and fix records so that leaders would transfer over to the new system as smoothly as possible. A lot of hard work and attending UK training was completed to help answer the compass queries as best as possible. Thank you to the Group leads for completing this huge task.

In April over 400 people took part in the St George's Day Celebration event in Londonderry Park. This family event welcomed everyone from across the district. Sections and groups took part in a renewal of promise service with some campfire songs and ending in an afternoon of games and activities. Thank you to all the groups that took part. The weather certainly made the event run smoother and it was great to see so many at the first St Georges day since Covid.

I met with Development Manager Vicky from HQ and Julie Wilson Region lead to look at the District Development Plan for 24/25. Scouts UK are looking at gaps in current groups and how we can open missing sections. I will be meeting with Group leads to discuss how we can do this in groups within the district.

In May I attended the SASU Flag dedication and renewal of promise service. This was a lovely service and great to see so many members at the event. It was also great to see Rev Gilpin doing so well after being unwell.

As always summer months were busy with groups camping and going to various sites and taking part in lots of adventurous activities.

NI AGM took part in September with the NI Chief Volunteer Lead Stephen Donaldson standing down and Stephen Bell taking up his new role. As a district, we thank Stephen Donaldson for all his years in post and the support and guidance he has shown Strangford District. We also wish Stephen Bell the very best of luck in his new role as he starts his term as the new chief.

NI Restructure officially started with seeing an end of an era to Counties and especially Co Down after 74 years. Strangford District is now in East Region along with North Down District and East Belfast overseen and supported by Julie Wilson. Thank you, Julie, for coming along this evening and I look forward to showing you around Strangford.

UK Transformation as mentioned earlier Compass has gone and we have a new system. Leaders will be able to log in across the coming weeks and I encourage leaders to attend training to help you learn to navigate the new system.

Every year as Scouts, we're 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.

This scouting year has been a difficult one for me personally for a number of reasons and it has made me reflect a lot on the values as I have just mentioned as well as our Scout Law and Promise. I reflect on what they mean to me and have meant across my scouting career and various roles held. I think about how they reflect Strangford District and what they may mean to individual leaders.

Not to be read out but merely discussion

The Promise is a simple way to help young people and adults celebrate their shared Scout values. Every Scout promises to stick by these values when they become a member.

On my honour

This separates this Promise from the Beaver and Cub Promise. It emphasises that keeping the Promise is a reflection of an individual's character and therefore strengthens the words of the Promise that follow. Keeping the Promise is entirely up to the individual.

I promise that I will do my best

The person is making the Promise for themselves. By taking responsibility for their actions the person is recognising that individuals are responsible for what they become and what they do. The Promise includes the requirement to 'do my best', not necessarily to be perfect. The person is expected to strive to reach their potential, rather than doing just enough to get by. This requirement to 'do my best' applies to all parts of the Promise that follow and does not mean perfection.

To do my duty to God

This uses the concept of duty to indicate that the person thinks and acts more widely than just about themselves, either through their faith or through their Scout values, depending on their chosen beliefs.

and to The King,

Make a positive contribution to society: 'The King' is a reference to the United Kingdom's constitutional monarchy, where the monarch reigns according to the laws of the nation. With this phrase, the person is expected to respect the laws of the land and to set a good example. For people of other nationalities resident in this country, this phrase may be replaced with 'the country in which I am now living'.

to help other people

Make a positive contribution to society: This refers to the person's responsibility to help others in various ways, including working towards a fairer world for all. For example, washing up after a meal or comforting someone who is upset.

and to keep the Scout Law

The Scout Law focuses on helping others and personal guidance, including thinking about the needs of others and doing a good turn. The Scout Law can help people to understand how to really live out their Scout Promise and Scout Values.

Scout Law

1. A Scout is to be trusted.
2. A Scout is loyal.
3. A Scout is friendly and considerate.
4. A Scout belongs to the world-wide family of Scouts.
5. A Scout has courage in all difficulties.
6. A Scout makes good use of time and is careful of possessions and property.
7. A Scout has self-respect and respect for others.

Our development of young people takes place when the 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.

Finally THANK YOU!!!!

To each and everyone of the leaders and helpers from all the young people in Strangford District and myself who you support on a daily basis and provide an excellent diverse programme, teaching and mentoring our young people to be the best that they can be. To the team leads (Tracey ADC Squirrels and Philip ADC Cubs) who have worked tirelessly to help and support 1stBallynahinch Scout Group and the opening after 34 years of 1st Greyabbey Scout Group. Thank you both for all your efforts they do not go unnoticed.

To the NI Youth Lead Kayleigh for working closely with our young people and supporting leaders with programs. Thank you for delivering the Young Leader scheme to explorers across the District. I would like to welcome Ryan to the District team as Strangford District Youth Lead who will be out visiting all groups and sections across the coming months.

To Richard the District Chair thank you for always being at the end of a phone, text or email. Discussing various issues and coming up with solutions to best support the District.

To Sean the District Treasurer, who has the hardest job and continues to do it so well. Thank you for keeping me right with the EA, CCNI, Explorer accounts and more. You are so meticulous in your work and I thank you for all your efforts.

Many thanks for you all attending the AGM tonight, I look forward to working with you all in the new scouting year, getting out to visit groups and sections and taking part in district and NI activities.

We are all experienced in so many ways and with so much knowledge—let's use that to our advantage in providing new memories for our Young People. If there is a role you would like to try or want to nominate someone for the role then please speak with me for more information.

This concludes my report.

Danielle Markwell
District Volunteer Lead

