

District Commissioners Report

As District Commissioner, I am pleased to present this year's report on the activities, achievements, and challenges faced by our Scout District. The past year has been eventful, and despite various challenges, the District has shown tremendous resilience, and teamwork. I would like to extend my heartfelt gratitude to all our volunteers, leaders, parents, and, of course, our young people for their commitment and enthusiasm.

Program Highlights

This year, our young people have participated in numerous camps, activities, and community service projects. Some key highlights include:

- **District Camp:** Our District Camp was a resounding success, with over 180 young people in attendance. They participated in a wide range of activities such as orienteering, pioneering, fire-building, and first aid.
- **Christmas at Balloo:** Our annual Christmas event for Squirrels and Beavers was well attended as always, for some the start of X Factor indicates that Christmas is on the way for me its Christmas at Balloo!

Leader Training and Development

Our adult volunteers are the backbone of the District, and their continuous development is essential to continue delivering quality programs.

- **First Aid Training:** A focus this year has been on compliance of mandatory training, and we ran a number of First Aid courses here in the district in an effort to ensure that all our leaders are fully compliant.
- **Skills Development:** This year we will be trialling a leader's skills day. Gillian will give more information on this later this evening, but I would really encourage you to attend. We would welcome any suggestions on what you would like covered and will be equally interested in any feedback afterwards.

Challenges

Like any organisation, we faced a number of challenges. As a district we have been dealing with issues which have caused quite a bit of turbulence, however, those have been investigated and dealt with by Northern Ireland and in some cases Gilwell Park and they are now largely behind us. Some remain ongoing and are now a matter for the courts. For that reason we won't go into this any further what remains is outside the control of this district and it is important that we turn the page now and focus on a new year of Scouting, delivering the very best Scouting we can for our young people.

Looking Ahead

As we look to the future, our goals for the coming year include:

- **Membership Retention and Growth:** We aim to further increase our membership and retain our existing Scouts by continuing to offer exciting and diverse programs.

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- **Leader Recruitment and Support:** A key priority will be the recruitment of new leaders and the continued support and development of our current leaders.
- **Program Development:** Tonight Gillian will introduce the calendar of events for 2024/25 which offers an extensive district programme aimed at supporting the sections and also bringing the district together more regularly. We will have more adventurous activities, and greater opportunities for personal development and skill-building for our young people.

I would like to thank all our volunteers, leaders, young people and parents, for their ongoing support and dedication. It is because of your commitment that we can continue providing life-changing opportunities for young people in our District.

As we take part in the remainder of the AGM and the leaders meeting afterwards, I would encourage you to remember why you chose to be part of this organisation. Its so easy to get bogged down in negativity but ultimately, and hopefully! we all have the same thing in common and that is to deliver Scouting as best we can to the young people in North Down.

Together, we look forward to another year of adventure.

Thank you.