

# Annual General Meeting

Thursday 25<sup>th</sup> September 2025

## Reports

### Minutes of the Previous Meeting; Thursday 26<sup>th</sup> September 2024

#### Present:

Lee Bragginton, Christine McKechnie, Richard Baker, Lynn Richardson, Ian Skidmore, Rob Bailey, Dave Tyler, Mike Hardacreis, Clare Vas, Ian Smewing, Andy Lyndon, Tracy Lyndon, Ted Batham, Martin Homer, Darryl Poultney, Dave Tyler, Tim Castle, Robert Bailey, Esmond Jones, Darrell Parton, Neal Quinton, James Steel, Graeme Welsh, Marie Welsh, Catherine Parton, Margaret Thomason, Richard Humphrey, Mary Mayo, Alistair Mayo, Gemma Carpenter, Alfie Carpenter, Elliot Carpenter, Jake Carpenter, Ethan Grice, Andrea Grice, Rachel Grice, Richard James, Pauline Porter, Charlotte Lyndon, Pauline Porter, John Porter, Peter Thomason, Christine Jones, Graham Jones, Adam Morgan, Dan Phillips, Barbara Welsh, Charlie Rowley, Jake Durbin, Andy Barlow

#### Apologies:

Mark Taylor, Veronica Ross, Alan Ross, Jamie Gray, Sara Lambert, Ian Austin, Steve Callow, Fran Sedgley, Adam Blount, Tim Castle, Simon Vilks, Bob Denson, Gerald Murray, Cynthia Murray

### Introduction & Welcome

Ian Skidmore opened the meeting and welcomed all attendees, including the distinguished guests.

It was noted this was the regions 50th year.

### Deputy Mayor of Wolverhampton

The Deputy Mayor welcomed all attendees and addressed the meeting.

### Apologies

Apologies were noted for those unable to attend.

## Reflection

A moment of reflection was taken to remember Dan Potter (Regional Commissioner) and Mike Abrahams who had both sadly passed away.

## Governance Topics

### Minutes of Previous AGM

The minutes of the previous Annual General Meeting, held on Thursday 21st September 2023, were signed by the Chairman of Trustees as a true and accurate record of events. There were no objections noted to the minutes.

### Adoption of the Constitution

A copy of the constitution had been made available in the slides and was discussed. It was unanimously agreed to adopt the Scout Council constitution and there were no objections raised.

### Financial Year

It was noted the financial year, to comply with the charity commission, would be 1st April to 31st March

### Approval of the Scout Council

The proposed Scout Council membership was approved.

This being all adult members with a role in the County, all District Commissioners from the County, all District Youth Commissioners from the County, all District Trustee Board Chairs from the County, all District Board Treasurers from the County, all District Active Support Managers from the County, one or two representatives from each District Scout Council (selected by the District Scout Council at their AGM). A representative from the County Troop Leadership Forum, a representative of the County Explorer Forum, a representative of the Scout Network, the Regional Commissioner or the Nation Chief Commissioner.

Quorum of the Scout Council – the quorum was agreed at 20 members.

## **Election of the Trustee Board**

The following roles were agreed and appointed to the Board, with no objections noted:

Chair of Trustees

Treasurer

County Lead Volunteer

Youth Lead

It was noted Pauline Porter would be stepping down as Secretary. Ian Skidmore thanked her for her contribution. A new secretary would not be appointed, instead the role would be replaced with a note taker.

Quorum of the Trustee Board – the quorum was agreed at 5 members, for sub committees it would be 50% of their membership.

## **Review of the Previous Year**

Ian Skidmore noted following Mark Bache's retirement, Lynn Richardson had been in the role of Acting County Lead Volunteer and had done an excellent job, thanks were noted for her contributions. There is now a new County Lead Volunteer Partnership in place, undertaken by Lynn Richardson and James Steel.

Following transformation the former Executive is now a Board of Trustees.

It was noted the County had been successful in securing £126K bid for funding for a paid support role. Following recruitment, Clare Vas has been employed in the role of Local Growth Officer.

Rob Bailey provided a summary of finances and accounts. It was noted the accountant had signed off the accounts. The accounts were approved in the meeting with no objections.

## Appointments

The following roles were appointed for the next 3 years:

County Chair – Ian Skidmore was nominated by James Steel and seconded by Richard Humphrey

Treasurer – Rob Bailey was nominated by Christine McKechnie and seconded by Neal Quinton

The following roles were appointed for the next 12 months:

County Trustee Board – members in addition to the Chair, Treasurer and County Lead Volunteers, Trustees would be Martin Homer, Christine McKechnie, Richard Humphrey, John Porter, Esmond Jones and Neal Quinton. This was proposed by Ian Skidmore and seconded Robert Bailey.

County President: Lord Austin was nominated and there were no objections raised.

County Vice Presidents: Christine Jones, Dave Tyler and Gill Hardacre – there were no objections

County Scout Council members to represent the County on the Council of The Scout Association. Lynn Richardson was nominated by John Porter and seconded by Esmond Jones. Ben Barlow was nominated by Lynn Richardson and seconded by Martin Homer.

## Election of Auditor

Lancaster Clement has supported for many years; it was agreed we continue with them as auditors. There were no objections raised.

## County Lead Volunteers Review

Lynn Richardson and James Steel provided a presentation, sharing an overview of membership, census figures, growth and transformation. A full copy of their report can be found in the supporting booklet.



# Scouts

West Mercia

## Presentation and Awards

A number of awards were presented. A full copy can be found in the supporting booklet.

## Thanks and Closing Remarks

Ian Skidmore thanked all those for attending and closed the meeting.

## **Lead Volunteer Partnership (Lynn Richardson & James Steel)**

For the period of this report, and since officially taking on the role, we have navigated what we consider having been a seamless transition into the County Lead Volunteer partnership. Part of this was leading the County through some of the biggest changes Scouting has seen in many years.

Our first year in post focused heavily on understanding what the team would look like post transformation and how we could best support across the county with such major changes. Although nationally transformation didn't rollout exactly as planned, West Mercia County, Districts and Groups did an amazing job in navigating and embedding these changes. We are all still on a journey of change but the county has embraced this and continues to deliver fantastic scouting locally to our youth members – for this we'd like to save a HUGE Thank You to all our volunteers.

## **Growth / Census**

We are delighted to report an overall growth of 0.9%, of which 1.2% growth of youth members and 0.1% adults.

Although we have seen a reduction in both the Beaver and Cub sections, this is in line with the UK downward trend however, on a positive, increases seen in Scouts and Explorers shows retention in the sections is strong. Squirrels increase is reflective of the Local growth Officer work and local recruitment and start-up of dreys across the county.

Clare Vas, our Local Growth Officer for the Under-Represented Areas Funding Project, has completed 10 projects in her first 12 months, which is a fantastic result and within the requirements of the funding. Clare has worked extremely well with our District leads and members of their teams to achieve these successes. As Clare enters her second year of her 2-year contract with us, she is currently working on numerous projects across 7 of our 8 Districts and plans to deliver on another 10 projects for year 2.

Clare has become an integral member of the West Mercia team, and we'd like to extend her thanks for the hard work, tenacity and professionalism she has demonstrated in her tasks.

## Strategy – Summit 25

In January 2025, a delegate of 7 represented our County at this national conference. The aim of Summit 25 was to shape the next Scout Strategy for the immediate 3 years but over 9 years.

Earlier in September a draft strategy was shared with us to discuss with District Leads and County Teams Leads and give feedback to HQ. This work has been completed and we now await the next phase.

## Programme Team

### International – Cuboree 2025

A most successful trip to the Dordogne, France was planned and preparations completed throughout this reporting period, culminating in the actual trip taking place in August 2025. Thanks to Darryl Poultney who led the trip and the other 8 leaders who supported him to give 33 Cubs and 6 Explorer Scout Young Leaders the international experience they had.

Taking Explorer Scout Young Leaders on a Cub trip, who were considered part of the leadership team, was a first time experiment that was a great success and it allowed the Young Leaders to develop themselves and their leadership skills during the planning, preparations and actual camp. All 6 individuals were a credit to their Units and Districts and this is something we will consider on future trips for the younger age range.

### International – World Scout Jamboree – Poland 2027

You will have hopefully seen that the WSJ journey towards 2027 has commenced with our leadership team being selected. With the support of the Programme Team

and International Advisor, Neal Quinton, the team will now progress the journey on behalf of the county which Ben Hatfield, Unit Leader will cover in his presentation at the AGM 2025.

### Support Team Transformation

As is mentioned at the start of this report, Transformation was possibly our biggest project, change and focus for 2024 and until transition date last November.

We are all still on a journey, and as mentioned in the County Team Leads report, plans to provide support, especially on the digital side, is to come.

A big success for our County was the great work and support our Go-Live Team provided before, during and continuing after the transition date. The Team, led by Richard Humphrey, gave their time in addition to their other Scouting responsibilities to provide invaluable support to many leaders across the county. Thank you all for the excellent job you all did.

### Volunteering Development Team Learning

Under the leadership of Darrell Parton, learning continues within the county and the provision for First Response has now started to be provided by an external company, funded by the County. This ensures adequate provision is available and that a consistent delivery of the modules is provided.

Wood Badges continue to be achieved despite them now being optional following transformation.

### Focus for 2025 / 2026

We have 2 key focus areas for the coming year. One is to recruit a County Youth Lead for which the search has commenced and secondly, Youth Top Awards where



# Scouts

## West Mercia

we will look District engagement led by the County programme Team so watch this space on both areas.

In closing, we are both delighted and honoured to be leading West Mercia County and will endeavour to do this to the best of our ability. Thank you.

Lynn Richardson and James Steel  
County Lead Volunteer Partnership



# Scouts

## West Mercia

### **Trustee Board Chairman (Ian Skidmore)**

Our first year as a Trustee Board has seen a smooth transition and my thanks to all Trustees for their support in the last year.

With both Lead Volunteers now in post for the full year I feel the County has made great progress in Groups, Districts and at County in embracing TRANSITION and instigating it throughout the County.

Financially it has been a stable year, with no international trips due to the break during Covid, however we look forward to Cuboree returning in August 2025, and hopefully to new events in the future.

There is work planned for the HQ to improve the facilities and this will hopefully take place in the coming year, funding permitting.

My thanks as always go out to all leaders, trustee's and helpers in the county for their sterling work to encourage all our young people in scouting.

Ian Skidmore  
Chair West Mercia Scouts.

**Treasurer (Robert Bailey) Finance Officer (Andrew Lyndon)**

CHARITY INFORMATION

Registered Office:  
Rear of St Matthews Church  
East Park way  
Wolverhampton  
WV1 2DN

Independent Examiner:  
M Cupitt FCCA  
Lancaster Clements Limited  
Certified Accountants  
Stanley House  
27 Wellington Road  
Bilston  
Wolverhampton  
West Midlands  
WV14 6AH

Solicitors  
Enoch Evans  
6-9 Hatherton Road  
Walsall  
WS1 1XS

**STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES**  
**YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025**

	Note	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total Funds 2025 £	Total Funds 2024 £
<b>INCOMING RESOURCES</b>					
<b>Voluntary Income</b>					
Membership Subscriptions	2a	44,118	-	44,118	40,762
Donations/Grants	2b	-	-	0	250
Income from charitable activities	2c	1,744	-	1,744	53,082
<b>Income from generating funds</b>					
Investment income	2d	4,880	-	4,880	1,413
Other	2e	259	-	259	480
<b>TOTAL INCOMING RESOURCES</b>		<b>51,001</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>51,001</b>	<b>95,987</b>
<b>RESOURCES EXPENDED</b>					
Cost of generating funds		200	-	200	350
Cost of charitable activities	3a	47,780	-	47,780	70,978
Governance		1,300	-	1,300	1,000
<b>TOTAL RESOURCES EXPENDED</b>		<b>49,280</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>49,280</b>	<b>72,328</b>
<b>NET INCOMING RESOURCES BEFORE TRANSFERS</b>		<b>1,721</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>1,721</b>	<b>23,659</b>
Transfer between funds		-	-	-	-
<b>NET INCOMING RESOURCES BEFORE OTHER RECOGNISED GAINS AND LOSSES</b>		<b>1,721</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>1,721</b>	<b>23,659</b>
<b>OTHER INCOME RESOURCES GAINS AND LOSSES</b>					
Unrealised gains/(losses) on investment assets	7	635	-	635	(156)
<b>NET MOVEMENT IN FUNDS</b>		<b>2,356</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>2,356</b>	<b>23,503</b>
Fund balances brought forward at 1 April 2023		182,042	332,246	514,288	490,785
<b>FUND BALANCES CARRIED FORWARD AT 31 MARCH 2024</b>		<b>184,398</b>	<b>332,246</b>	<b>516,644</b>	<b>514,288</b>

**BALANCE SHEET**  
**31 March 2025**

	Note	2025		2024	
		£	£	£	£
<b>UNRESTRICTED FUNDS</b>					
General fund	4		122,849		122,849
Designated funds	4		61,550		59,193
			<u>184,399</u>		<u>182,042</u>
<b>RESTRICTED FUNDS</b>	5		332,246		332,246
			<u>516,645</u>		<u>514,288</u>
<b>Represented by:</b>					
<b>FIXED ASSETS</b>					
Tangible assets	6		275,756		283,288
Investments	7		119,007		90,884
			<u>394,763</u>		<u>374,172</u>
<b>CURRENT ASSETS</b>					
Stocks	8	1,250		2,150	
Debtors	9	1,725		2,864	
Balance at bank	10	142,803		317,119	
			<u>145,778</u>		<u>322,133</u>
Less CREDITORS: amounts falling due within one year	11	23,896		182,017	
			<u>121,882</u>		<u>140,116</u>
<b>NET CURRENT ASSETS</b>			<u>516,645</u>		<u>514,288</u>

The financial statements were approved by the Trustees on behalf by:

and signed on their

\_\_\_\_\_  
Ian Skidmore  
County Chairman

\_\_\_\_\_  
Robert M Bailey FCA  
County Treasurer

**NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS**  
**YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025**

**1 ACCOUNTING POLICIES**

**a Status**

The County is a Registered Charity, No. 524648.

**b Consolidation**

The accounts do not consolidate West Mercia Scout County Limited, a company limited by shares, which is a wholly owned subsidiary of West Mercia Scout County. This is due to the Company being dormant for the period.

**c Basis of Accounting**

The financial statements have been prepared to give a 'true and fair' view and have departed from the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 only to the extent required to provide a 'true and fair' view. This departure has involved following the Charities SORP (FRS 102) published on 16 July 2014 rather than the Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice effective from 1 April 2005 which has since been withdrawn.

The financial statements have been prepared under the historical cost convention with items recognised at cost or transaction value unless otherwise stated in the relevant notes to these accounts. The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the Statement of Recommended Practice: Accounting and Reporting by Charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) issued on 16 July 2014 and Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the United Kingdom and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) and Charities Act 2011.

**d Tangible Fixed Assets**

Provision for depreciating fixed assets held for use by the Charity is made at annual rates calculated to spread the costs (less anticipated residual disposal value) of each asset evenly over its expected useful life. The depreciation rates currently in use are at the following rates on costs:-

■	Buildings	2%
■	Office equipment	10%
■	Training Team equipment	10%
■	Motor Vehicle	25%

All tangible fixed assets are used for charitable purposes.

Depreciation is not charged in year of purchase.

**e Stocks**

Stocks of badges and books have been estimated at the lower of costs and net realisable value.

**f Investment Income**

Dividends, interest and rents are credited as income when received.

**NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS**  
**YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025**

**1 ACCOUNTING POLICIES continued**

**g Cashflow Statements**

In accordance with Financial Reporting Standard for Smaller Entities (effective January 2015) the County is not required to produce cashflow statements.

**h Designated Funds**

The County has designated certain funds for specific purposes but which are not legally separate funds.

**i Restricted Funds**

Restricted Funds are funds subject to specific trusts either declared by donor or through an appeal.

**j Donations, Legacies and Similar Income**

Donations, legacies and similar income resources are included in the year which they are receivable, which is when the Charity becomes entitled to the Resource. The value of services provided by volunteers has not been included.

**k Incoming Resources**

All incoming resources are included in the Statement of Financial Activities when the Charity is legally entitled to the income and the amount can be quantified with reasonable accuracy. Grants receivable are credited to the Statement of Financial Activities (SOFA) in the year for which they are received. Deferred income represents amounts for future periods and is released to incoming resources in the period for which it has been received.

**l Expenditure**

All expenditure is included on an accruals basis and is recognised when there is a legal or constructive obligation to pay for expenditure. All costs have been directly attributed to one of the categories of resources expended in the SOFA. The Charity is not registered for VAT and accordingly expenditure is shown gross of irrecoverable VAT. Governance costs include those costs associated with meeting the Constitutional and Statutory requirements of the Charity and include Independent Examination fees.

**m Investments**

Investments are included at market value at the year end. Any gains or loss on revaluation is taken to the Statement of Financial Activities.

**NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS**  
**YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025**

2	INCOMING RESOURCES	2024	2023
		£	£
<b>a</b>	<b>Membership Subscriptions</b>		
	Subscriptions	220,590	205,875
	Less: Paid to The Scout Association	(174,150)	(162,413)
	Rebate to Districts	(2,322)	(2,700)
		<u>44,118</u>	<u>40,762</u>
<b>b</b>	<b>Donations, Grants and Similar Income</b>		
	Grants:	0	0
	Donations: General	<u>0</u>	<u>250</u>
		0	250
	Donations: Headquarters building and equipment fund	-	0
		<u>0</u>	<u>250</u>
<b>c</b>	<b>Activities in Furtherance of The Charity's Objects</b>		
	Training Fees	-	0
	Other activity income	1,744	53,082
		<u>1,744</u>	<u>53,082</u>
<b>d</b>	<b>Investment Income</b>		
	Quoted investments	73	84
	Short Term Investment Service	0	54
	Building Society interest	2,488	1,270
	Other deposit interest	2,319	5
		<u>4,880</u>	<u>1,413</u>
<b>e</b>	<b>Activities for Generating Funds</b>		
	Retail/mail order/e-bay sales	<u>259</u>	<u>390</u>

Of the total income of £951,001 (2024: £95,987) £51,001 (2024: £95,987) related to unrestricted funds and £nil (2023: £nil) related to restricted funds.

3	RESOURCES EXTENDED	Direct Costs	Depreciation	Support Costs	2025 Total	2024 Total
		£	£	£	£	£
<b>a</b>	<b>Cost of Charitable Activities</b>					
	Training costs	896	-	-	896	1,896
	Other activity costs	5,674	11,521	26,689	43,884	66,082
	Development	3,000	-	-	3,000	3,000
		<u>9,570</u>	<u>11,521</u>	<u>26,689</u>	<u>47,780</u>	<u>70,978</u>
		Cost of Generating Funds	Training	Other Activities	Total	Total
<b>b</b>	<b>Support Costs</b>					
	General overheads	10,959	-	-	10,959	13,707
	Administrative costs	15,730	-	-	15,730	13,710
		<u>26,689</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>26,689</u>	<u>27,417</u>

Support costs have been allocated across the different activities on the basis of specific costs.

Of the total expenditure of £49,280 (2024: £72,484) related to unrestricted funds and £nil (2024: £nil) related to restricted funds.

**NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS**  
**YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025**

4 UNRESTRICTED FUNDS	B/F	Income	Expendi- ture	Transfers/ revaluations	C/F
	£	£	£	£	£
<i>Designated funds</i>					
Badge Secretary	13,620	-	-	-	13,620
World Jamboree Unit	1,992	-	-	(183)	1,809
Scouting activities support fund	10,105	-	-	-	10,105
Section activities fund	4,067	-	-	-	4,067
Development	909	-	-	-	909
Explorer Explosion fund	623	-	-	-	623
Cub Gibraltar fund	8,000	-	-	-	8,000
Archery fund	446	-	-	(45)	401
Recovery Fund	19,431	-	-	-	19,431
	<u>59,193</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>(228)</u>	<u>58,965</u>
 General Fund	 122,849	 51,636	 49,280	 228	 125,433
	<u>182,042</u>	<u>51,636</u>	<u>49,280</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>184,398</u>

The above funds have been set aside by the County Executive to be used for their particular purpose.

5 RESTRICTED FUNDS	1 April 2024	Movement		Transfer	31 March 2025
	£	Incoming £	Outgoing £	£	£
Headquarters building and equipment fund	<u>332,246</u>	-	-	-	<u>332,246</u>

The Headquarters Building and Equipment Fund is set aside to show the amount invested in tangible fixed assets as this is not available to be used for revenue expenditure.

6 TANGIBLE FIXED ASSETS	Land and buildings	Office equipment	Computer equipment	Motor Vehicle	Total
	£	£	£		£
<i>COST</i>					
At 1 April 2023	359,148	70,402	-	2,500	432,050
Additions	-	-	3,988	-	3,988
Disposals	-	-	-	-	-
At 31 March 2024	<u>359,148</u>	<u>70,402</u>	<u>3,988</u>	<u>2,500</u>	<u>436,038</u>
<i>DEPRECIATION</i>					
At 1 April 2023	90,770	56,742	-	1,250	148,762
Charge for the year	6,572	4,324	-	625	11,521
Eliminated on disposals	-	-	-	-	-
At 31 March 2024	<u>97,342</u>	<u>61,066</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>1,875</u>	<u>160,283</u>
<i>NET BOOK VALUE</i>					
At 31 March 2024	<u>261,806</u>	<u>9,336</u>	<u>3,988</u>	<u>625</u>	<u>275,755</u>
At 31 March 2023	<u>268,378</u>	<u>13,660</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>1,250</u>	<u>283,288</u>

**NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS**  
**YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025**

7	<b>FIXED ASSETS INVESTMENTS</b>	2025	2024
		£	£
	<i>Quoted Investments</i>		
	Market value at 1 April 2024	1,198	1,354
	Decrease in market value	635	(156)
	<b>Market value at 31 March 2025</b>	<b><u>1,833</u></b>	<b><u>1,198</u></b>
	Historical cost at 31 March 2025 £2,150 (2024: £2,150)		
	<i>Unquoted Investments</i>		
	Scout Association investment	-	-
	Tipton & Coseley Building Society	117,174	89,686
		<b><u>89,686</u></b>	<b><u>89,686</u></b>
	<b>Total investments at market value at 31 March 2025</b>	<b><u>91,519</u></b>	<b><u>90,884</u></b>
8	<b>STOCKS</b>		
	Badges (estimated)	1,250	1,450
	Books	0	700
		<b><u>1,250</u></b>	<b><u>2,150</u></b>
9	<b>DEBTORS</b>		
	Prepayments	<b><u>1,725</u></b>	<b><u>2,864</u></b>
10	<b>BALANCE AT BANK</b>		
	Virgin Training Team Current Account	20,946	1,752
	Cater Allen Private Bank	7,030	49,102
	Barclays WJ Account		
	CAF Bank Current	28,803	180,265
	CAF Bank Gold	1,024	1,000
	Shawbrook 60 Day	35,000	35,000
	Shawbrook Year	50,000	50,000
		<b><u>142,803</u></b>	<b><u>317,119</u></b>
11	<b>CREDITORS: amounts falling due within one year</b>		
	Accrued expenses	2,950	1,000
	Deposits	946	1,752
	Subscriptions in advance	0	179,265
		<b><u>3,896</u></b>	<b><u>182,017</u></b>

**NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS**  
**YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025**

**12 ANALYSIS OF NET ASSETS BY FUND**

	Un- Restricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total £
Tangible fixed assets	-	275,756	275,756
Investments	119,007	-	119,007
Current assets	39,844	105,946	145,790
Less: Current liabilities	(23,908)	-	(23,908)
	<u>134,943</u>	<u>381,702</u>	<u>516,645</u>

**13 EMPLOYEES REMUNERATION**

	2025 £	2024 £
Total remuneration for the year	-	-
Salary	-	-
Social Security costs	-	-
Pension Contributions	-	-
	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>
	<u>Number</u>	<u>Number</u>
The average number of paid staff for the year	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>

**14 TRUSTEES' REMUNERATION AND EXPENSES**

	£	£
Remuneration paid to trustees	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>
Expenses paid to trustees for travelling expenses	<u>3,103</u>	<u>1,959</u>
	<u>Number</u>	<u>Number</u>
Number of trustees reimbursed	<u>11</u>	<u>6</u>

**15 INDEPENDENT EXAMINERS REMUNERATION**

	2025 £	2024 £
Fees	<u>1,300</u>	<u>1,000</u>

**INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S REPORT**  
**THE SCOUT ASSOCIATION**  
**WEST MERCIA SCOUT COUNTY**

I report on the accounts of The Scout Association of West Mercia Scout County for the year ended 31 March 2024, which are set out on pages 2 to 9.

***RESPECTIVE RESPONSIBILITIES OF TRUSTEES AND EXAMINER***

The Charity's trustees are responsible for the preparation of the accounts. The Charity's trustees consider that an audit is not required for this year under Section 144(2) of the Charities Act 2011 (the 2011 Act) and that an independent examination is required.

It is my responsibility to:

examine the accounts under Section 145 of the 2011 Act

follow the procedures laid down in the General Directions given by the Charity Commission under Section 145(5)(b) of the 2011 Act and

state whether particular matters have come to my attention.

***BASIS OF INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S REPORT***

My examination was carried out in accordance with the General Directions given by the Charity Commission. An examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the Charity and a comparison of the accounts presented with those records. It also includes consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts and seeking explanations from you as trustees concerning any such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in an audit and consequently no opinion is given as to whether the accounts present a 'true and fair view' and the report is limited to those matters set out in the statement below.

***INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S STATEMENT***

In connection with my examination, no matter has come to my attention:

- 1 which give me reasonable cause to believe that, in any material respect, the requirements:
  - (i) to keep accounting records in accordance with Section 130 of the 2011 Act and
  - (ii) to prepare accounts which accord with the accounting records and to comply with the accounting requirements of the 2011 Acthave not been met, or
- 2 to which, in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of accounts to be reached.

Lancaster Clements Limited  
Certified Accountants  
Stanley House  
27 Wellington Road  
Bilston  
Wolverhampton  
West Midlands  
WV14 6AH

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Mark Cupitt FCCA  
Director  
Lancaster Clements Limited

24 September 2025

**Volunteering Development Team, Programme, and Support Team leads.**

As you are all very much aware Transformation was delayed and consequently, as roles changed since the last AGM, there was inevitably a cross over from previous responsibilities as they were taken up in the new roles, hence the combination of our reports for this passing year.

Big Thanks, as we moved through Transformation some took the opportunity to focus their support for Scouting in other roles so we would like to take this opportunity to say thank you to the Counties Sectional ACC's, Local Training Managers, Training Advisors, Nights Away Advisers, Appointment Advisory Committee members and First Aid Trainers who have stepped down, their support at County level in the past has been much appreciated

**Volunteering Development Team (Darrell Parton)** (Learning Assessors / Trainers / Welcome Conversation Volunteers / First Response Trainers/Adult Recognition) As we started after transformation with everyone still learning the new system and getting to grips with it, this has thrown up a host of new challenges to all the team, which hopefully now we have overcome. Any leader wishing to complete their wood badges must identify this on the new system and we can contact them and arrange learning for them. We now have regular learning sessions set up on the county website giving options for the leaders to pick suitable dates for themselves.

Turning to first response, the county has out-sourced the majority of this learning to Chase Training to undertake our first response courses. This started in September with 6 courses on track before Christmas, leaders must book on them through the county website. The county has taken the decision to also cover the cost for this, which is a big expenditure for us but does make the learning free to all leaders. Margaret Thomason now manages this process. Any leaders who undertake a first response/ first aid course outside of scouting or at work can upload their certificate for verification to the county website and this can then be transferred onto their records. We are also catching up now with Module 10B's, the first response practical assessment, and will be putting on extra sessions to cover those that have completed a Module 10A session already. As we go forward, we will be offering

courses for the next 3 years and releasing them on a 3-month block giving leaders enough time to book on them before the old certificates expire.

After a large investment from both the RAF Stem Team and the County, supported by our Trustees, we now have 7 leaders trained to deliver Stem activities across the county. With the RAF STEM team, we have over recent years been able to put on a Lego themed stem event to help build team leadership skills and problem-solving skills. These have been towards the Silver Crest award, well now we can run these ourselves. We have had a successful trial run at Walsall district camp in May and are now looking at rolling out more sessions across the county. If any districts or district sections are interested, then please feel free to contact us about a booking. Also, if any leaders are interested in joining our team, please let me know as the more adults we have that can deliver this the more sessions we can offer.

Having had feedback from leaders across the county we are looking at putting on learning sessions for the new system to those who still may be struggling with coming to terms with it or want to brush up their skills on how it works. The dates for these sessions will soon be available on the county website.

We are looking to offer Learning opportunities specific for the new Sectional Wood Badge requirements and Skills for Residential Experience (Module 38), see the County Website for more details, dates and application forms.

## Adult Recognition - 1<sup>st</sup> April 2024 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2025

Award;	Numbers	Source	Numbers
Bar to the Award for Merit	2	County	5
Award for Merit	10	Dudley	3
Chief Scout's Commendation for Good Service	12	Walsall/Walsall North	24
Commendation Award	9	Wolverhampton North	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>33</b>

All Award nominations need to be initiated through the new Data Base. Applications now rely heavily on the nominator inputting the fine detail of the individual's exceptional service to the Movement at this initial stage of the application process.

Please be aware that it could be the case that someone at, for example, District level is not able to provide the extended detail that somebody at Group level could provide within the initial application. The District however, may be willing to add additional support to the initial submission, which in turn could improve chances of a successful outcome.

As an application progresses along the line of the Team Structure/Pyramid of the Association it becomes increasingly unlikely people further along the line can add significantly to the information already submitted. This can often be the case when an application reaches County level, and it is almost certainly the case if it reaches the National Awards Advisory Group. Please consider this guidance when setting out on the award application process?

**Support Team (Richard Baker)** (Go-live Support Team / County HQ/ Financial Operations/ Minibus Operations)

Running up to and following Transformation the County Go-Live Support Team have been able to resolve issues and guide many leaders through the challenges encountered with the New Membership System, in particular Mark Whitcome, who has spent considerable time and effort responding to calls for assistance in a timely manner.

Esmond Jones has been very proactive in dealing with some of the challenges faced at County HQ, which have included the utilities supply to the building as well attending to other issues, often at short notice, as and when they have occurred. I would like to thank all the other team members for their contributions as part of the Support team over the last 12 months.

We are delighted to welcome Andy Lyndon, ex District Commissioner for Walsall, to the team, who has specific tasks of financial operations. Andy is making progress

in digitalising the financial operating model for the county with the support of our Treasurer, Rob Bailey.

The minibus, gifted to the County for use by West Mercia Scout members, continues to provide opportunities for groups and districts to travel together at a very affordable cost. Neal Quinton manages the operations for bookings and maintenance and does such a great job that we hope the bus continues to provide this service for many years to come.

**Programme Team (Richard Humphrey)** (Assessor - Nights away / Adventurous Activities / Visits Abroad / Kings Scout and Duke of Edinburgh / STEM Team)

I am very pleased to say the Programme Team is building and has been in action over all of its new found responsibilities, assessing permits, promoting and supporting highest awards for young people, working closely with the Volunteering Development Team introducing new STEM Lego activities and working directly with leaders arranging visits abroad. I am particularly indebted to Neal Quinton for his report that follows on the international activities over the past year:

- 1<sup>st</sup> Wollescote Network do a visit to Luxembourg.
- Halesowen District Network had a trip to Switzerland and Austria.
- HDX Explorers ran another trip to KISC Switzerland.
- The County ran an extremely successful trip to the Dordogne France with the County cubs; they did various activities and were blessed with amazing weather.
- 1<sup>st</sup> Wall Heath Scouts ran a similar trip to France.
- 1<sup>st</sup> St Thomas Scout Group also made a trip to France.

Thank you to all the leaders that made these fantastic events happen and the opportunity they have provided to the many young people of this County.

Internationally it was the 16th World Scout Moot were 5000 young members meet in Portugal for fun and adventure.

The run up next World Scout Jamboree is now commencing it's 2-year journey, it is being held in Gdansk, Poland during the summer of 2027. The County leadership team have recently been announced; a short presentation will be done tonight to explain the process of applying for the young people from the County. We all wish them well on this exciting journey and look forward to supporting and following their progress.

So far, we have 2 internationally in process for 2026 from the County, the international process has been changing and the Programme Team endeavour to keep people up to date with the requirements and support as needed.

Andy Barlow continues as the Manager of the Activity Permit Scheme (MAPS) and along with his County Safety Advisor role has provided much needed monitoring and guidance of our Adventurous activities, he has worked hard with HQ on recent incidents helping to recommend and initiate process changes to avoid similar occurrences, many thanks for his diligence.

The Programme Team plans for the future include more STEM Lego opportunities moving around the County and building the Team itself. We also look to provide Forums for the Permit Assessors to meet, keep up to date and share best practice. We are also looking to work with the District Programme Leads to provide days where the section teams can meet and explore programme ideas appropriate for their sections and continue to encourage our young people to gain top awards.

Gary Darby - Duke of Edinburgh Award & King Scout Award

**DofE**

Bronze 8

Silver 4

Gold 6

**Kings Scout**

1 confirmed and approved

## Local Growth Officer (Clare Vas)

### Project Update - Steering Group Meeting

#### Finished Projects

##### **12<sup>th</sup> Walsall Squirrels**

Project completed – Squirrels up and running and leaders keen to grow Squirrels and develop.

##### **12<sup>th</sup> Wolverhampton Squirrels**

Project completed – Squirrels up and running. Leaders doing a great job with Squirrels.

##### **1<sup>st</sup> Shareshill (Featherstone draw is the aim)**

A lot of work went into this to have a successful well attended open event in October and the following adult talk night had a sign up of 8 adults to support the opening of sections (Beavers and Cubs). Only 2 attended taster session planning meeting following that and then numbers dropped off.

Several parents willing to support as team members/parent rota but despite great efforts to creatively engage a team, they were not willing/able to do so without a team leader in place to offer guidance.

They were informed the group would not continue in January if there were no volunteers and no response was received. These are parents who ultimately have nothing to lose – they got 4 free weeks of Scouts but there is no leverage as there is with parents who have seen what their children get from it and don't want it to stop.

This project has ended with no group opened – to do so would not be sustainable. There is the desire for children to attend – those that came to all the taster sessions loved it. There are a couple of parents who would be good leaders, and it would be a shame to lose them as team members elsewhere. There are a couple of potential new leaders, even if no group opens.

Learning – Starting new sections/groups from scratch takes a lot of commitment from a district team. An identified mentor who can support for at least 6 Months really needs to be identified to 'train up' and role model for completely new to Scouts adults. Volunteers supporting taster sessions in these scenarios would

benefit from an addition meeting to think about a script/how to talk to new volunteers, and to ensure they are up to date with the current training arrangements/requirements.

Moving forward – the role of team leader/team member is live on [scouts.org.uk](https://scouts.org.uk). Should there be an identified person who wants to volunteer in the area, there is still scope to revisit as we have a list of families who would want to engage.

## **Russell's Hall Hospital (1)**

### **1<sup>st</sup> Fens Pool (Dudley) – Squirrels and Beavers (2&3)**

Open event took place in October. This was successful in terms of turn out and the leaders ran the bases well. However, there were some concerns regarding building safety and mitigating risks.

Squirrels and Beavers have been meeting as a joint section temporarily out of 3<sup>rd</sup> Brierley Hill whilst other venues were sought. Every possible venue in the Pensnett area has been approached and is either not available or not suitable.

As a result, the leaders will transfer to 2<sup>nd</sup> Kingswinford who do not have a Squirrel Drey (still in IMD 1-3 and meets project aims) but have a waiting list. This offers options and the possibility of a second drey or colony should that be what the leaders want to do. However, it also offers them some wrap around support from an experienced team while they get the hang of the administrative side of Scouts. On the growth plan this will appear as 1<sup>st</sup> Fens Pool Group closed, 2<sup>nd</sup> Kingswinford Squirrels opened.

### **Rowley Regis – Group starting with Beavers and Cubs (4&5)**

Completed -grant application made and in progress. Need to ensure existing team delegate and share load to prevent burn out.

### **1<sup>st</sup> Bilston Squirrels (6)**

Project closed with 5 volunteers. Some drop off in young people after taster sessions, but new enquiries coming so have no doubt the Squirrel numbers will increase steadily. Section thriving and volunteers pro activity wanting to recruit more Squirrels now – have supported (Sept 2025) with some local Facebook ads for new recruits.

### **Rowley Regis Scouts and Squirrels (7 &8)**

Natural continuation of opening the new group – both sections with new volunteers attached to them. News article written by UYF media support regarding Scout section, touching on the whole group.

### **1<sup>st</sup> Blakenall Heath Squirrels (9)**

This has been a challenging section, partly due to the area and getting numbers in to Squirrels. The impact of advertising Squirrels has increased numbers considerably in all sections and raised awareness that the group exists in the community. There are a number of volunteers involved in Squirrels, but still in the building confidence stages and needing to support to progress to being able to take control entirely. This has shown the importance of a named mentor for new volunteers. Still want new Squirrels and so there is background work in terms of promotion taking place with a local school and cross publicity whilst working with 2<sup>nd</sup> Bloxwich locally.

### **3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesfield Beavers (10)**

Really successful open event held, although it attracted more children from older sections than Beavers. Numbers across the whole group have increased and leaders have been given some encouragement to hold their own events and be proactive in the community. Feedback to DLV re session that I attended after the open event regarding organisation and management of young people which could be a reason why some families do not remain at the group.

## Allocated Projects

### **1<sup>st</sup> Netherton Beavers (11)**

Open event was held on 8<sup>th</sup> May – Attendance of 9 young people. Adult talk held on the day – 2 parents said they would be willing to be part of a team, but neither could commit as team leader or every week. 1 had previously been Brownie leader and was very anxious about being left to run everything. The ask of other parents was to share with people you know and if they have any links in schools or community groups to spread the word.

Have not been able to gain any access to schools – emails, telephone calls and no responses.

Met with Community Development workers for Dudley and Netherton area - they shared that their experience with schools is challenge too. Suggested Primrose Church as a support, and Cradley Tesco community champion.

Met with primrose church – suggested running scout themed session at youth group but youth group leader said no.

Attended Netherton Fair – not high footfall compared to previous years.

Agreed to work with 2<sup>nd</sup> Cradley to do some fundraising/promotion at Cradley Tesco but community champions have not responded to development workers.

Group attended Netherton Boat festival 13<sup>th</sup> September.

This has been a really tough area to break into and get word out in the community. Will continue to try – have a potential link in to one of the primary schools through science teacher, but do not want to start an unsustainable section.

### **1<sup>st</sup> Sandwell Squirrels (12)**

Open event planned for 30<sup>th</sup> September. Struggling to get sign ups. Again, schools have not been willing for assemblies, although some have said they will put in newsletters. Held 2 pop up scouts sessions in local libraries over summer holiday. Families did enjoy them, but not the right age range. What was clear is the community isn't aware of what Scouts is – spent a lot of time explaining what we do to families. As part of the project a new Beaver leader has been recruited (Squirrels times didn't work for her). Local Facebook pages have been used to

advertise and the group is proactive in promoting it too. Local church has agreed to put up posters, and local community venues have posters too. To look at any local stay and play groups instead of schools as that has been successful elsewhere.

## **2<sup>nd</sup> Bloxwich Beavers (13)**

Open event planned for 2<sup>nd</sup> October – all ages welcome but school promotion will be for Beaver age.

17 year old responded to advert at One Walsall for young leader role and wishes to support at 2<sup>nd</sup> Bloxwich – 18 in the new year so a potential new leader to nurture. Nearest school said they would put in newsletters but couldn't do assembly. Other school on estate are welcoming me for an assembly to KS1 and a stand at gates after school on 24<sup>th</sup> September.

Have done a Saturday morning in Bloxwich library – interest from all those who attended for either Bloxwich or 1<sup>st</sup> Blakenall showing definite interest and need in community.

Attended community hub opening close by to the scout meeting place. Will use day of school assembly to distribute flyers to any other local places.

Have asked council if any opportunities to have a pop up market Stall in Bloxwich market or any other promotion opportunities available.

## **15<sup>th</sup> Wolverhampton Squirrels (14)**

Open event planned for 28<sup>th</sup> September – at the moment 4 signed up but most are not local – they have signed up because local Squirrels are full. 1 possibly willing to volunteer but does already do Brownies and isn't local.

Attended Bantock (local School) parents evening before the summer holidays. This is a community that doesn't know what Scouts is and were quite anxious about being approached or talked to about Scouts. Really interesting to hear parents express concern about Black sons attending Scouts and the risk associated with them being out in the dark – how do we show Scouts is not a 'youth club' but a safe place?

2 other local schools – 1 not responding to messages – either email or telephone call follow up. 1 said they do not promote third party organisations.

Met with vicar from local church – he said he would think about how to bring the knowledge of scouts to congregation. He explained the area East of the group

(between the hall and city centre) is one of a more transient community who haven't lived there long so the sense of belonging to an area is now missing and that can make it hard to engage the community, especially a very diverse one. Once challenge is that there is potential 'overlap' with catchments of other groups too.

Attended AGM and families were helpful in providing suggestions or links that they have for going into local schools/local playgroups.

Open event is on local facebook groups and flyers have been distributed around the area and to all the local nurseries.

### **37<sup>th</sup> Wolverhampton Sea Scouts Squirrels (15)**

Open event planned for 10<sup>th</sup> November – now in the process of starting to make noise and connect with the local community. A few sibling squirrels already on waiting list and 1 potential NMND who wishes to be a member of Squirrel team, so a positive start when nothing has actually happened yet. Section is already open on membership system from a previous attempt but sessions never started. They have received their grant previously, and that was ringfenced for Squirrel use.

### **5<sup>th</sup> Tettenhall Squirrels (16)**

Squirrels is an aspirational project at 5<sup>th</sup> Tettenhall. There is not an existing Trustee Board and the leadership team is made up of 3 people (1 temporary). Beaver numbers are good, cubs a bit lower. Focus is to try and get a Governance structure in place in order to be in a position to move forward with Squirrels.

Have planned a 'bring an adult' night for 8<sup>th</sup> October – all young people will bring an adult to take part in some activities. External agencies will also be sent an invitation to attend and have a go at Scouts before an adult talk takes place to explain what is needed to keep the group sustainable in the long term.

Group are self targeting local colleges for young leaders.

Will review following that night to see where we stand in terms of adults and whether new sections are viable.

### **3<sup>rd</sup> Kingswinford Squirrels (17)**

Planned for a January 2026 start.

### **Dovecotes new group (long term 18, 19, 20, 21)**

Dovecotes TMO is very supportive and keen to have a youth provision in the area. A report was sent to their Trustee Board and they have agreed to provide the community room for scouts free of charge for 12 Months and then a gradually increasing rate over the following 3 years to ensure the group has time to get off the ground, fundraise, apply for grants etc.

Attended summer event – Wolverhampton Love your community in Dovecotes - a lot of interest from young people and families and one member of the Board keen to volunteer.

Dovecote School is supportive and have said I can do an assembly and be on playground after school – awaiting confirmation of the date – have followed up with reception who know I need a reply!

Attended family activity at Saffran (Collins Aerospace) – facilitated by 1<sup>st</sup> Fordhouses but in area of Dovecotes too – in fact I think I gave out leaflets for almost every open event being held in Wolverhampton and West Mercia flyers as the draw was from all over. Future plan to attend their apprentice day to target YL and new to area apprentices looking for CV boosts.

Attended JLR family day – that was less busy – weather and the event was more spread out so we got a bit lost. They have offered an opportunity to go to the plant on a working day to talk to adults about volunteering, so will continue to pursue that.

All day open even to be held Saturday 4<sup>th</sup> October 2025 – goal to ascertain level of interest, age profile of interest and then to move on to an adult talk and preparing volunteers to start sections.

Actions for District – ensure the building audit and agreements are completed and there is an identified mentor in place for new volunteers.

Other

Dudley CVS – recruiting Trustees: happens regularly. Useful for groups to think about a skills audit of Trustee board and then target those gaps in the long term – who are we looking for rather than just bums on seats. All volunteers can attend if they wish to – might be useful for sharing with chairs. For Dudley districts they can provide support for new Trustees learning the role too.



# Scouts

## West Mercia

Black Country Multi cultural day – Was much quieter than anticipated, but got an ad hoc promotional slot on Black country Radio – Thank you Nic!

Dudley DWP connect with your community day – 1 new volunteer for Halesowen district, albeit not in a group that is desperate!

Dudley volunteer fair attended – low attendance but fed back that the venue was an issue – KWRFC needs a car to get to and no passing footfall.

Sandwell colleges community connections session – Sandwell college want to build their connections with the community. They are interested in providing a space for linking up with public service students to become young leaders and opportunities to talk to other students about Scouts. Colleges exist in Sandwell and Dudley areas – new Cradley Heath campus opening in January focussing on adults and employability skills so a possible opportunity there.

Meet the funder Dudley 17/9/25 – supporting groups to apply for grants – the session is in the daytime so I'm attending to ensure local groups know what the funder is looking for and can word grant applications accordingly.

District promotional pack links send to DLVS for future use/to share with groups where needed.

Local School in Bloxwich wants to promote Scouts but offering after school sessions for the term – can't meet that demand but is a good position for discussion and future thoughts for satellite squirrels of new groups in the area.

Just for fun – Leader in Halesowen wanted to talk about how to break down barriers for care experienced young people in Scouts and scope for additional training/working with Local Authorities so we are putting some thoughts together.



# Scouts

## West Mercia

### Learning and consideration

- Squirrels: It isn't as easy now to recruit Squirrels, especially in more diverse areas. Those that want to go to Squirrels already do and will travel for that to the groups in districts that have it, so now there is a greater level of advertising and convincing needed.
- Cubs seems to be the section that is 'easiest' to recruit to at the moment if holding an open event for all sections.
- Sustainability post project – Success in recruitment of adults and young people has been about the capacity of team to be seen out and about, to be at events, to be known in the community. That relies on volunteers being able and willing to work more evenings or weekends for what may to them feel like little reward.
- Consultation with Scouts in Black Communities project lead. Her advice is that if there is an area that is not accessing Scouts, there needs to be someone who is seen consistently in that community from Scouts – attending fairs, community events, community meetings. Not with an agenda beyond, Scouts is seen consistently in that community, rather than is going once with a specific (apparently selfish) ask. That builds trust hopefully leading to long term desire to have Scouts in the community. Can use MSF as a way of showing that specific communities have created Scouts to meet their needs. – In reality this is district team long term role.
- How do we support the process of change for longer term members? How we talk about Scouts makes a big difference.