



DISTRICT SCOUT COUNCIL

ANNUAL REPORT

1ST APRIL 2023 – 31ST MARCH 2024

including

TRUSTEES' ANNUAL REPORT

and

ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR ENDING

31 March 2024

(accompanying document)

Sevenoaks District Scout Council

Charity registered in England No: 303435

Scout Association registered No: 12717

Annual report for the year ending 31 March, 2024

PRESIDENT: Richard Parry

THE DISTRICT TRUSTEE BOARD:

Ex-Officio Members:

These will change as we adopt changed rules moving forward from the 2024 AGM

District Chairman	Anthony Hitchings
District Treasurer	Sam Devenney (resigned Dec 2023)
District Secretary	Nicola Crawford
District Leadership Team	Jo Brookbank and Michael Dreksler
District Youth Commissioners	Vacant
District Network Comm'r	Katie McCreadie
District Explorer Scout Comm'r	Mike Randall

Elected Members: Michael Schwarz, Erik Barrow, Nigel Rainey, Nick Roberts, William Morrish

DLTs Nominated Members: Jennifer Baker-Hirst, Ellen Murphy (resigned Jan 2024), Bianca Steinhardt

Co-opted Members: None

SUB-COMMITTEES:

APPOINTMENTS: Chris Barrow (Appointments Chairman) Nigel Rainey (Secretary),
Michael Schwarz, Jeanette Schwarz, Kelly Williams, Tom McKeen, Hayley Bechervaise.

FINANCE: Jennifer Baker-Hirst and DC-Team

ESTATES: Michael Schwarz; William Morrish and Nick Roberts

DISTRICT ROLES:

District Active Support Mgr	Vacancy
District Scout Shop Mgr	Ellen Murphy (resigned Jan 2024), Bianca Steinhardt, Jade Roberts (from Jan 2024)
District Badge Secretary	Jeanette Schwarz
District Scout Quartermaster	Vacancy
Youth Representative	Vacancy
Local Training Manager	Nigel Rainey
ADC Activities	Erik Barrow
District Beaver Team	Jan Padgett, Shelley Williams
District Cub Team	Nick Roberts, Phil Seabrook
District Scout Team	Vacancy

Bankers	Lloyds TSB
Other adviser:	CCLA Investment Management Ltd
Charity contact:	Jennifer Baker-Hirst , 9 The Glebe Field, Shoreham Lane, Sevenoaks, Kent, TN13 3DR

Structure, governance and management

The Sevenoaks District Scout Council'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 Sevenoaks District Scout Council is a trust established under its rules which are common to all Scouts. The agreed quorum for the Sevenoaks District Scout Council AGM is 15, and for committee meetings in 2023 was one third plus one of the Trustee board plus 1.

The Sevenoaks District Scout Council, which is an educational charity, is Governed by the Trustee Board, whose members are responsible for ensuring compliance with legislation applicable to charities.

The Trustee Board exists to support the District Leadership team in meeting their responsibilities and to provide support for the charity.

Risk and Internal Control

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

Trustee board selection methods

The Trustees are appointed in accordance with the Policy, Organisation and Rules of The Scout Association at the Annual General Meeting (AGM), either by election or approval of their nomination; other trustees may be co-opted during the year to serve until the next AGM.

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 cooperate 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.

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DISTRICT LEAD VOLUNTEER REPORT

Our Scouting year started with our all District camp, Mag 7, taking place over the early bank holiday weekend. Over 600 young people attended from all groups, units and sections including Squirrels. The weather held for us despite the previous week of rain that had caused many, including ourselves, to cancel our St George's parade through Sevenoaks high street. Instead we all renewed our promise during our closing ceremony when we were joined by the Lord-Lieutenant of Kent, Lady Colgrain and ex County Commissioner and Deputy Lord-Lieutenant Kevin Holford for the presentation of Jo's British Empire Medal. We were also able to present Silver Acorn awards to Rose Mears and Nigel Rainey along with several commendations.

Our District camp is the highlight of our 4 yearly calendar and it was a huge success thanks to all of the Sevenoaks volunteers who made it happen and also the acquisition of district equipment in the preceding years, largely purchased through grant funding. All Cubs, Scouts and Explorers used our new "team building" laser tag system and every member used our new zorb balls of varying sizes. Our new water equipment, newly trained and permitted adults plus the amazing Kent Scouts Water team and Tonbridge Canoe Club Coaches, enabled us to deliver water activities to almost 300 Scouts and Explorers. We were also indebted to the Kent Scouts Climbing team for the creation and delivery of an amazing climbing, abseiling and jump bag platform. Finally a huge thank you to Erik Barrow who wrote a bespoke booking system just for this camp.

All groups and sections in the District continue to take part in nights away activities throughout the year with every group running successful Summer camps. Our Beavers enjoyed a District Beach party and Junk modelling event and we have plans for other section events in the year ahead.

Youth membership exceeded one thousand this year following the opening of new sections, in the past 18 months, which included two more Squirrel Dreys making our total now four Dreys in Sevenoaks, with plans to open at least one more in the coming year. We were also delighted to end the year with the opening of our fourth Explorer Unit named "Knole" based in Weald.

We sold our old District Seal HQ at the end of the year, which was in serious need of repair and the site will be redeveloped by the new owners. This has given us a solid start of around a third of the build cost of our new District HQ "barn", for which we expect to submit a planning application to build by the end of 2024 .

The new "barn" will be on the edge of the development being planned by Tarmac on their quarry site and as well as providing a new home for Seal Scout Group, allowing expansion, it will also provide access to many exciting activities for all Scouts and other youth based organisations in our area with future access to the new leisure lake and plans for an indoor climbing and bouldering wall.

Jo Brookbank and Michael Dreksler, District Leadership Team

FINANCIAL REVIEW

Financial Year End

The Financial Statements for the year ended 31st March 2024 relate to a 12 month accounting period and are prepared on a Receipts and Payments basis.

Cash and Investments

At the end of the year, total cash funds amounted to £556,981 (2023 £173,102). The District adopts a risk averse approach to investment of its funds and all funds are held with mainstream banks with the exception of units held in COIF The Charities and Investment Fund - these units were valued at £63,627 in March 2024 (original purchase price £19,783). Post year end the restricted funds have been placed in long and short term deposits with Flagstone, a cash deposit platform, which enables distribution of the funds across various banks in order to manage risk.

Reserves policy

It is the policy of Sevenoaks District Scout Council to hold a reasonable level of reserves in order to provide a sound financial basis for the development and running of Scouting within the District and to vary that level through annual budgeting according to perceived future needs and risks. In particular, the funds are there to provide financial support to Scout Groups in the event of financial difficulties to continue operation or to establish or improve their facilities, to supplement the cost of training leaders, to subsidise the annual membership subscriptions, to support the prepayment of fees for young people attending Jamborees, to up-date and purchase activity equipment, and to cover possible unforeseen costs and emergencies. At the end of the financial year 23/24 we have allocated £25,000 as a reserve.

APPROVAL

The Trustees declare that they have approved the Trustees Report on:

Signed on behalf of the Charity's Trustees:

A Hitchings, District Chair

J Brookbank (BEM), District Leadership Team

DISTRICT ESTATES TEAM REPORT

Progress with the development of the new centre for scouting in Sevenoaks is ongoing. We are planning to be in a position to submit the detailed planning application later this year but this is dependent on the overall planning consent for the Sevenoaks Quarry development being finalised. The brief for the scheme has been settled and the intention is that the building will provide a new home for the Seal Scout Group together with various facilities for the rest of scouting in Sevenoaks. A design team has been appointed and the feasibility study is underway to determine an accurate cost estimate. The scout site in Jubilee Rise in Seal has been sold and this provides a good starting point for the fundraising that will be required if the new centre is going to contain all of the facilities planned. A professional fundraising consultant is being appointed to work with a fundraising committee that is being formed. The District Trustee Board are looking for more volunteers to assist with this exciting project both on a technical level and on the fundraising so if you are interested please contact Anthony Hitchings.

Nick Roberts , Estates Team Chair

DISTRICT YOUTH COMMISSIONERS REPORT

The Youth Commissioner role has remained vacant this year and the search for youth representation on the executive committee is ongoing. This is an opportunity for somebody aged 18-25 to gain management experience that would reflect well on any CV. Mentoring and guidance will be provided. If you are interested or know anybody who is interested please let us know,

Chairman

EXPLORER SCOUT SECTION

Explorer Scouting in Sevenoaks for 2023 - 2024 was another year packed full of activities and camps that supported our mission in scouting to prepare young people with skills for life.

My thanks go to all the Explorer leaders across the district, who have done an outstanding job once again, and thanks also go to anyone who has provided help, whether occasionally or regularly during the year. We could not run the programmes we do without you.

Our 2024 census numbers showed we had a total of 109 Explorers in the District, supported by 16 Leaders. This is an increase on the previous census by 10 Explorers and 6 Adult helpers.

The below table shows the numbers per unit at the time of the census.

Unit	Numbers
Beaufighters	16
Holmesdale	36
Puxty	36
Knole	
Churchill (Young Leaders)	21

At the end of 2023, we said thanks and goodbye to Dave and Ben, after helping Duncan run the unit for several years, Dave and his partner relocated outside of the district and Ben, had to take a step back due to work commitments.

Therefore, we started 2024 by welcoming a new team of leaders at Holmesdale, Bekki, Tom, Millie, Josh, and Ian joined Duncan at the unit. We introduced a new leader rota system which meant an improved scout / work / life balance. In reflection, this has worked well, but there were some lessons to be learned, which the team will take forward into the next term.

At Beaufighters, we also said goodbye to Dr Jon Axon, like Dave and Ben, Jon had been a valuable member of the leadership team in Edenbridge for many years and thanks go to him for everything he contributed to the unit.

Fortunately we have been lucky enough to find and welcome Brandon Allen to the leadership team in the unit and they continue to deliver a quality programme for the Explorers.

Some of the activity highlights from the year include participation in the 2024 Monopoly Run. This year 60 of our Explorers were able to participate in the annual event around London in March.

The leaders also took a group of Explorers to the Big Weekend Camp at Lower Grange Farm, Maidstone and the Beaufighter members enjoyed a unit camp at Broadstone Warren.

Teams were also entered into the Winter Survival challenge. We had planned to enter two teams, but unfortunately, we had to withdraw one of them prior to the event due to illness.

However, George, Sam, Ollie, and Max did take part in the 40.1-mile hike, completing the course in 17 hours 28 minutes. This happened to be the fastest time, and they came home with the trophy!!



In May, 14 Explorers and 2 Leaders took to the air courtesy of the Kent Micro lighting team, this was the second time we had run this event, which despite a few postponements caused by waterlogged runways or bad weather was thoroughly enjoyed by all.

This year we also continued to offer participation in the Duke of Edinburgh award programme. Huge thanks go to Andy and Duncan, who are leading this for the district. The continued partnership with Tonbridge has allowed over 20 Explorers to work towards their bronze and silver awards.

As we look forward to the coming year, we are extremely excited and pleased to be opening another Explorer Unit in the District. The Knole unit will be opening in April 2024, meeting on a Monday evening in Weald.

We will also be taking a group of people to Bewl Water in September for an action-packed weekend of water-based activities as well as starting to plan our participation in the 2025 Kent International Jamboree.

Please remember to keep an eye on OSM and book to indicate interest in these events, doing so early will help us to make sure we have enough Leaders / Adults to safely allow us to participate.

Mike Randall, District Explorer Scout Leader. Mike will become our 18-25 leader moving forward

DISTRICT ACTIVE SUPPORT REVIEW

The District has six active support units supporting specific activities, managed by Erik, our ADC Activities. All of which provided incredible support to the District camp, Mag7 as well as throughout the year.

- Archery ASU
- Climbing ASU
- Fencing ASU
- Rifle Shooting ASU
- Tomahawk ASU
- Water ASU

Additionally it has a small unit of people who continue to support scouting in the district. At the current time this unit does not have a manager.

ACTIVITIES REPORT

This past year (1st April 2023 – 31st March 2024) has been a remarkable period for the Sevenoaks Scout District, marked by successful events, international experiences, and advancements in our district's infrastructure.

One of the major highlights was the MAG7 camp, held in April 2023. This four-yearly event brought together scouts from across the district for a weekend filled with adventure and camaraderie. The camp introduced exciting new activity equipment, including laser tag and an expanded range of bubble football and zorb balls. These additions were well-received and will continue to enhance our district's activity offerings in the future.

In the summer of 2023, eight of our explorers had the incredible opportunity to attend the World Scout Jamboree in Korea. Although the event was unexpectedly cut short due to an evacuation from the site, our scouts and volunteers demonstrated resilience and adaptability, making the most of their time in Korea. The experience, while not what they had initially expected, was still a memorable one. Special thanks go to Rob, who served as a Unit Leader, and Max, and Felix, who joined me to contribute as members of the International Service Team. Their dedication exemplified the spirit of Scouting, and they returned with stories and experiences that will inspire many in our district.

We are excited to announce the near completion of our new district website, which is set to launch following final checks. This website features a revamped equipment booking system that includes automatic quoting, streamlining the process for everyone involved. Additionally, the website will offer a platform for activity notifications and approvals, as well as incident reporting. These enhancements are designed to make district operations more efficient and user-friendly, benefiting all our members.

Looking back, the progress we've made in the past year builds on the foundations laid during the previous reporting period. As we continue to expand and improve our activities, equipment, and infrastructure, we remain committed to providing the best possible experiences for our scouts and volunteers.

We look forward to another year of growth, adventure, and community.

Erik Barrow (Assistant District Commissioner Activities)

Volunteering Development Team

In our first year as a new District team, we've made significant strides in fostering a thriving volunteer community:

Welcoming New Volunteers: We've enhanced the onboarding experience to ensure new volunteers feel valued and supported from the start. This includes integrating the "Welcome Conversation" into the District Appointments process, involving a member of their new team or group.

Training and Development: We're committed to providing accessible training and resources so volunteers can excel in their roles. Nigel Rainey leads our dedicated sub-team in this area.

Volunteer Recruitment: Under Chris Barrow's leadership, we've formed a sub-team focused on attracting and recruiting new volunteers to meet the District's evolving needs.

Recognition and Appreciation: We're actively developing systems to acknowledge and celebrate the invaluable contributions of our volunteers. Jeanette Schwarz heads our new sub-team focused on managing and promoting volunteer awards.

Disclosures and Role Status

We've made considerable progress in ensuring all adult volunteers have a valid DBS before participating in Scouting activities. Throughout the year, we've taken proactive steps to suspend or close roles for 13 volunteers until their DBS was in place or their volunteer status was clarified.

Overall, we're proud of the foundation we've built and are excited to continue strengthening our volunteer community in the coming year.

Chris Barrow, Volunteering Development Team Leader

Training & Development Report

Training this year has been focusing on members getting their Safety and Safeguarding in place along with newer members completing their "Getting started" learning, before we transition to the new membership system. Also there has been a need for members' roles to be adjusted so that they would move over with the least problems as possible. After the transition we expect learning to be easier for everyone where the need for the full wood badge learning becomes an optional choice for our members. Adult members will be expected to complete learning that focuses on the Safety and Safeguarding of our member's young and old with further learning providing opportunities for learning how to programme plan. All this will be carrying on during the following year when it is hoped the transformation takes place late October and into November 2024.

Compliance

This is an ongoing activity, as we try to get all members of Kent County up to speed with their responsibilities of completing their learning again in Safety, Safeguarding and First aid. Each member is expected to renew this learning every 3 years from their last

completion date. Those that do not get this done are suspended from meetings and activities, for them to focus their time on getting the learning completed.

Nigel Rainey, Volunteering Development Team - Training & Development Lead

ADULT AWARDS

The following awards have been made in the District in the year ending 31st March 2024

Award for Merit

- Russell Porter

Chief Scout's Commendation for Good Service

- Matt Podd

Commissioners Commendation for Good Service

- Mike Smith
- Nigel Hadley
- Olie Morgan
- Riana Taylor

Chief Scout's 40 years Service Award

- Thomas Crittenden

Chief Scout's 25 years Service Award

- Bernie Wright
- Julie Madden

Chief Scout's 20 years Service Award

- Mark Whittock

Chief Scout's 15 years Service Award

- Chris Thompson
- David Hitchings
- Michael Dreksler
- Nicholas Roberts
- Steve Kelley

- Will McCann

Chief Scout's 10 years Service Award

- Carl Ellmer
- Charlene Pounds
- Clair Doyle
- Jamie Finley
- John Baker
- Mike Smith
- Michael Richards
- Michael Holliman
- Shelley Williams

Chief Scout's 5 years Service Award

- Andrew Holness
- Ben Martyr
- Billy King
- Catherine McCall
- Chris Terrahe
- Chris Bechervaise
- Chris Brooker
- Claire Edmonds
- Lizzy Thompson
- Hayley Bechervaise
- Jennifer Baker-Hirst
- Jessica Fox
- Jon Axon
- Matthew Wheeler
- Paul Tibbert
- Philippe Marr
- Richard Bell
- Ruth Richman
- Samuel Sharp
- Stephen Burgess
- Stuart Toller
- Suzie Lovelock
- Suzanne Caskey
- Tina Lane

CENSUS

	2023											2024										
Group	Sq	Be	Cu	Sc	Ex	YL	Ne	Ldr	Youth	Adults		Sq	Be	Cu	Sc	Ex	YL	Ne	Ldr	Youth	Adults	
District	0	0	0	0	99	0	21	7	120	31		0	0	0	0	109	0	20	41	129	41	
1st Sevenoaks (Hicks Own)	0	20	24	33	0	14	0	13	77	23		0	18	25	33	0	7	0	13	76	19	
3rd Sevenoaks (Riverhead)	0	22	66	72	0	19	0	31	160	37		5	34	73	82	0	25	0	37	194	44	
4th Sevenoaks (St John's)	15	42	56	65	0	7	0	23	178	68		25	38	43	59	0	4	0	25	165	76	
6th Sevenoaks (Kemsing)	0	15	15	19	0	2	0	7	49	14		0	16	21	16	0	1	0	7	53	14	
7th Sevenoaks (Halstead)	0	21	11	14	0	0	0	8	46	13		0	13	18	12	0	1	0	8	43	14	
9th Sevenoaks (Seal)	0	15	18	14	0	1	0	3	47	15		0	15	11	16	0	1	0	4	42	13	
10th Sevenoaks (Weald)	0	21	14	22	0	2	0	7	57	11		4	15	19	28	0	2	0	10	66	15	
12th Sevenoaks (1st Edenbridge)	0	36	23	30	0	3	0	23	89	32		0	34	19	25	0	4	0	20	78	27	
15th Sevenoaks (Otford)	0	19	36	26	0	5	0	9	81	16		0	23	34	24	0	3	0	10	81	16	
16th Sevenoaks (Ide Hill)	0	13	17	19	0	1	0	8	49	13		0	19	22	18	0	1	0	8	59	14	
17th Sevenoaks (Westerham)	0	12	12	19	0	3	0	11	43	20		0	14	19	19	0	2	0	9	52	17	
District Totals	15	236	292	333	99	57	21	150	996	293		34	239	304	332	109	51	20	192	1038	310	

Sq = Squirrels, Be = Beavers, Cu = Cubs, Sc = Scouts, Ex = Explorers, YL = Explorer Young Leaders, Ne = Network, Ldr = Leaders and Section Assistants.

For the purposes of the census, Network members are included in the Youth total. Adults only include those with membership roles other than Network membership.

It is pleasing to note that our youth membership is over the 1,000 mark.

Michael Dreksler

DISTRICT UNIFORM SHOP

The shop has continued to flourish and orders are submitted every week during term time from almost every group in the district as well as new volunteers needing uniform reflecting the need for a local shop. As such we have found we need to increase our stock levels to accommodate the regular orders. We are also grateful for the additional support received from Trisha and Jamie Finley at the end of the financial year and for their commitment to join the team.

Please do ensure you share the website with new parents so we can continue to benefit from the revenue this adds to the district funds.

Bianca Steinhardt and Jade Roberts, Scout Shop Managers

Squirrels **BEAVERS** **cubs** **SCOUTS** **EXPLORERS** **network**