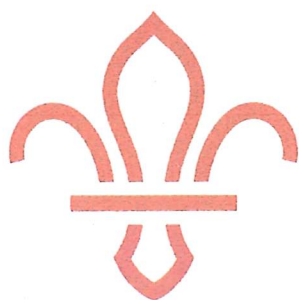


# **Gwent Area Scout Council**

## **Annual General Meeting**

**Thursday 27th June 2024**



# **Scouts**

**Gwent**

# **Gwent Area Scout Council Annual General Meeting**

**Thursday 27th June 2024**

## **AGENDA**

Welcome by Edward Watts, MBE, DL, Chairman Gwent Area Scout Council

1. To receive apologies for absence.
2. To receive and approve the Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on Thursday 29th June, 2023.
3. To receive and approve the Annual Review.
4. Address by Area Commissioner.
5. To receive the Accounts of the Area Scout Council.
6. To appoint an Area Chair.
7. To appoint an Area Treasurer.
8. To appoint members to the Area Board of Trustees.
9. To approve any additional or community members to the Area Scout Council.
10. To appoint one representative to the Council of the Association  
To appoint one representative aged 18/25 to the Council of the Association.
11. To appoint two representatives (1 Scouter, 1 Trustee) to the Welsh Scout Council.  
To appoint one representative aged 18/25 to the Welsh Scout Council.
12. To appoint an Auditor/Independent Examiner.
13. To acknowledge the incumbents in the role of Area President and Area Vice Presidents
14. To adopt the Area Constitution.
15. Address by Chief Commissioner of Wales
16. Presentations

**Minutes of the Annual General Meeting  
of the Gwent Area Scout Council  
held at the Mission to Seafarers, Newport  
Thursday 29th June 2023**

Edward Watts, Chairman of the Gwent Area Scout Council opened the meeting by welcoming members of the Area Scout Council, He also expressed his pleasure that the Area President Robert Aitken LLt was able to be present, together with other guests; Prof Simon Gibson, High Sheriff, Jeff Cuthbert, PCC, Rhian Moore Chief Commissioner and Rob Redmond Regional Commissioner, Scouts Cymru.

The Area President gave a brief address, commenting that it had been a momentous year and on scouting's Royal patronage. He was pleased to be associated with scouting and thanked everyone for what they are doing.

The Chairman then asked for a moments reflection on those who had gone home, Joyceanne Sargent, Tony Bracher, Peter Hallows, Brian Parker.

31 persons were present.

**1. Apologies:**

23 Apologies were received.

**2. To receive and approve the minutes of the 2022 Annual General Meeting.**

The minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 23<sup>rd</sup> June 2022 were received approved.

**3. To receive and approve the Annual Review.**

The report was received and approved.

**4. Address by the Area Commissioner.**

Chris Owen-Brooks gave a short address indicating he had enjoyed his time along with Chris Davy as Acting Area Commissioner but he was standing down from the role after the AGM as it was only intended to be a temporary arrangement. He highlighted a number of items within his report. The Chairman thanked both the Chris's keeping the ship afloat.

**5. To receive and approve the accounts of the Area Scout Council.**

The Chair reported the accounts had been submitted by the treasurer, who was unable to be with us and thanked her for her services.

The accounts were received and approved

**6. To approve the Area Commissioner's Nomination for Chairman.**

The Area Commissioner indicated his nomination for Chairman was Edward Watts, this was approved.



**7. To elect (i) The Area Secretary and (ii) The Area Treasurer.**

The Chairman reported that the nomination for Secretary was Mike Breakwell, He was elected unopposed. The Chairman then indicated that the role of Treasurer was currently vacant efforts were being made to fill the role.

**8. To receive the result of the ballot of those members elected to the Area Scout Executive Committee.**

The Secretary reported that only 4 nominations had been received therefore there was no need for a ballot, resulting in Bernard Townsend, Helen Gardner, Christopher Munslow and Andy Scarisbrick being duly elected.

**9. To approve the Area Commissioner's nominations of members to the Area Scout Council.**

The nominations of Martyn Walters and Bethanie Headworth were approved.

**10. To approve the Area Commissioner's nominations of members to the Area Scout Executive Committee.**

The nominations of Yvonne Jones, Andrew Osman, James King and Chris Davy were approved.

**11. To appoint (a) one representative to the Council of the Association and (b) one representative aged 18/25 to the Council of the Association.**

The nominations of Edward Watts (a) and Dylan Murray (b) were approved.

**12. To appoint (a) two representatives to the Welsh Scout Council and (b) one representative aged 18/25 to the Welsh Scout Council.**

The nominations of Chris Munslow, Chris Owen-Brooks (a) and Peth Watkins (b) were approved.

**13. To appoint and Auditor/Independent Examiner.**

The nomination of Gareth Beale was approved.

**14. To re-adopt the Area Constitution.**

The Chairman reported that this was a new item as a result of an amendment to the Associations Policy, Organisation and Rules which in the interest of openness, especially for new members, that the Area Constitution be reviewed every AGM. He indicated that a small amendment was required with the re-designation of Executive Committees becoming a Board of Trustees. A copy of the current constitution was available.

**15. Address by the Chief Commissioner of Wales.**

Rhian Moore commenced her address by posing the question 'Why do we Scout'. She commented on the work the two Chris's had done in covering the role of Area Commissioner. She noted that numbers were now well up. The main theme of her presentation was the future and we should look forward with optimism and courage, embracing new opportunities in providing new skills for life for young people and volunteers. Changes in titles and ways of recruiting members will be challenging. The Squirrels section is developing quickly with new Dreys opening throughout Wales.



She thanked all in Gwent for their services and emphasised 'Remember, We are SCOUTS'

**16. Presentations.**

Chris Owen Brooks presented Long Service Awards to Elaine Burrill (20years) and Chris Davy (25years).

Peter Sheppard (ATM) then referred to the Arty Morgans Training Award; he indicated the recipient had been decided but is not present so will be presented at a later date. ( )

The Chair in closing the meeting, thanked everyone for their attendance and wished every success in the future.

## Gwent Scouting

This last Scouting year has been one of change and opportunities. Change in so much as we must welcome the new Area Lead Volunteer Elizabeth O'Malley, who has taken over the role from Chris Owen-Brookes. First, and foremost I extend my thanks to Chris for the sterling work he has done when he stepped in to hold the fort. I am pleased to announce that Chris has taken up the role of Area Treasurer. Thank you, Chris.

Under the new leadership of Elizabeth (Silver), I know that the area will continue to grow and exceed expectations as it has always done in the past. During this period I have had the great pleasure of attending Monmouthshire's St Georges Day parades across the region and attending the Blaenau Gwent Annual General Meeting. Another event that I attended along with members of the team was an all-day Conference around the new transformation change which comes into place this coming year.

Covid, I think has taught us a lot. One of the things it has taught us is to think 'outside of the box'. We need to look at innovative and become inventive. Secondly, it has taught us to better understand our resilient nature. The most important factor that has come out of this is that young people wanted to get out of their bedrooms and take part in face-to-face scouting activities and be part of a life-learning association. With the increase in members, I must say a big thank you to all the Leadership team within Gwent, for the outstanding work that they all did and continue to do for our young people.

I would like to take this opportunity of thanking the Executive Board for the hard work, the time and effort they have and continue to put into Gwent Scouting. As Chair their help, support and knowledge is greatly appreciated. I must make a special mention for our Secretary Mike Breakwell, and Christine Davy who continue to be the main anchors within the Executive.

To conclude, over the past year I have been proud and honoured to be Chair and continue to see scouting at its best.

**Edward Watts MBE DL**

Chair Gwent Scouting



## Area Lead Volunteer Report

Gwent Area AGM 27<sup>th</sup> June 2024

AGM time always gives us an opportunity to reflect on what has happened over the last year and to think about the year to come. Lots has happened since this time last year. For me personally, I took on Acting Area Commissioner role back in September and now 9 months later submit this my first report as Area Lead Volunteer. During this time, I have had many invites to groups all over the Area. I would like to thank every group that has extended an invite and to those that I have been able to visit. All groups have been very welcoming and allowed me to gain insight into Scouting within Gwent, from dropping into camps and sleepovers, badge presentations, investitures of new members, District activity fun days, weekly sessions, and Anniversary parties of groups.

I would also like to thank all of our Area Trustee Board and Area Team for the warm welcome and their support in the 9 months that I have been part of Gwent Team. Without their support and dedication area would not be in the good position that we are. I must express particular thanks to both Edward Watts and Mike Breakwell for their constant support and guidance since taking on the role.

Gwent Area has continued to have growth in membership, 7% increase in Youth members and 3% in leader membership this is due to the hard work of many leaders and parents. We now have more youth members with 2446 regularly involved. Our youngest section continues to grow with more Dreys having opened this year with an engaging active programme seeing demand for spaces still increasing. We still have large waiting lists in some locations and so there is still a need for recruitment of volunteers.

Our young people have had amazing opportunities at group, District and Area level with many badges along the way. I have had honour of awarding two Queens Scouts Awards since September, and we have a few nearing completion. We also have a few members involved with International trips this summer at Roverway and Explorer Belts.

There have been many things to celebrate over the last 12 months – the amazing activities, trips and learning of new skills which our young people have experienced. Gwentrek 2023 was a fantastic event, and this year promises to be just as great, event team are working hard to ensure the weekend runs smoothly as always.

Nationally transformation is the priority, at Area and District levels much work is happening to ensure new roles are agreed, teams are in place and all volunteers are prepared for the changes which are happening.



Our compliance for mandatory on-going learning remains in a good position thanks to monitoring and District Lead Volunteers and Area training team. This will always remain a focus to ensure we are delivering safe scouting for all our members.

Finally, I would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone involved in Scouting within Gwent for everything that you do, whether its weekly, monthly, or just once a year. As Baden-Powell said, "the most worth-while thing is to try to put happiness into the lives of others" and I think that is what we do.

Silver

Elizabeth O'Malley

Area Lead Volunteer

## REGISTRATION OF MEMBERSHIP AREA SUMMARY

SECTION	2019	2020	2021 COVID	2022	2023	2024	+/-
<b>Squirrel Scouts</b>							
Blaenau Gwent					6	10	+4
Monmouthshire				18	45	72	+27
Newport					14	70	+56
Torfaen					8	4	-4
<b>Beaver Scouts</b>							
Blaenau Gwent	65	47	12	22	34	44	+10
Monmouthshire	226	175	87	205	243	234	-9
Newport	176	207	138	209	255	236	-19
Torfaen	119	122	74	98	111	106	-5
<b>Cub Scouts</b>							
Blaenau Gwent	79	67	32	33	49	62	+13
Monmouthshire	313	321	246	280	287	310	+23
Newport	206	255	208	265	321	289	-32
Torfaen	132	144	89	115	100	124	+24
<b>Scouts</b>							
Blaenau Gwent	59	56	25	31	27	36	+9
Monmouthshire	243	254	213	281	270	298	+28
Newport	207	210	202	233	259	284	+25
Torfaen	100	96	90	84	85	86	+1
<b>Explorer Scouts</b>							
Blaenau Gwent	9	12	2	2	9	11	+2
Monmouthshire	70	74	61	77	94	90	-4
Newport	50	52	41	47	47	57	+10
Torfaen	24	23	15	29	26	23	-3
<b>Scout Network</b>							
Blaenau Gwent	12	10	1	5	1	0	-1
Monmouthshire	19	18	14	27	28	27	-1
Newport	37	30	16	14	13	2	-11
Torfaen	17	20	12	8	5	1	-4
<b>Adult</b>							
Blaenau Gwent	101	95	70	61	52	58	+6
Monmouthshire	255	258	236	269	268	296	+28
Newport	245	260	251	254	278	271	-7
Torfaen	149	137	128	122	115	123	+8
<b>TOTALS</b>							
Area	31	34	38	45	27	29	+2
Blaenau Gwent	325	287	142	154	178	221	+43
Monmouthshire	1156	1100	857	1157	1235	1327	+92
Newport	921	1014	856	1022	1187	1209	+22
Torfaen	541	542	408	456	450	467	+17
<b>AREA TOTAL</b>	<b>2979</b>	<b>2982</b>	<b>2301</b>	<b>2834</b>	<b>3077</b>	<b>3253</b>	<b>+176</b>



The reporting year was the first in a long time that it's felt somewhat "normal" and we were able to deliver a full range of learning experiences throughout the whole year again.

We continued to run our usual calendar of two 'multi module' weekends, and the Skills for Nights Away weekend, as well as supporting two Young Leader residentials. We also delivered a small number of virtual learning workshops in evenings for those modules it suits, to enable volunteers with different needs to attend.

Demand for first aid training has continued, and 6 First Response courses were run for adult volunteers and Young Leaders throughout the year. As many will be aware already, following the volunteer experience transformation, all those volunteering in Programme roles working directly with young people will be required to hold first aid, so we expect demand to increase shortly, and have worked to increase the number of First Response trainers to accommodate this.

ScoutsCymru now have a regular programme of the blended approach for first aid, and we have supported the short assessment part of this locally on demand where required.

Later in the year we ran another Achieving Growth workshop for those in manager/supporter roles. A small handful of key volunteers were able to finish their Wood Badges as a result.

As always, we continued to support local validation events where requested, and this has also led to the completion of many Wood Badges.

We also provided trainer/subject matter expert support to our neighbours in Mid Glamorgan to run hillwalking permit training at Plas Dolygaer and climbing/abseiling permit training at CRAI Activity Park.

Planning for the transformation of our volunteer experience has continued, although somewhat delayed nationally now – moving from training to learning, and a focus on "Growing Roots" and "Branching Out". While we need to be prepared for change, the message right now is "business as usual", but planning continues for a training weekend in the autumn, a full diary of First Response courses.

I will also be looking imminently to build the new Volunteering Development team for Gwent, which will have a slightly altered remit to the current Area Training Team. Information and recruitment to some key roles will be out shortly.

Peter Sheppard, Volunteering Development Team Leader  
(currently Area Training Manager)

June 2024



## Wood Badge roll of honour

Congratulations to the following on being awarded their Wood Badge during 2023\*.

Lisa Michael	1st Pontnewydd	Section Leader - Cub Scouts
Jason Jones	1st Panteg (St Marys)	Section Leader - Beaver Scouts
Mark Bevan	1st Panteg (St Marys)	Assistant Section Leader - Beaver Scouts
Sam Howells	29th Newport	Assistant Section Leader - Scouts
Gareth Oakley	24th Newport	Group Scout Leader
Leah Cozzi	28th Newport	Assistant Section Leader - Beaver Scouts
Leah Cozzi	28th Newport	Section Leader - Squirrel Scouts
Sue Friis-Jones	1st Marshfield	Section Leader - Scouts
Sue Meyler	1st Caerleon (Newport)	Assistant Section Leader - Scouts
'Bear' Griffiths	1st Henllys	Assistant Section Leader - Scouts
Joanna Attwood	1st Marshfield	Section Leader - Beaver Scouts
Max Bennett	Monmouthshire	District Section Leader - Explorer Scouts
Max Bennett	1st Sedbury and Tidenham	Assistant Section Leader - Scouts
Lesley O'Connell	1st Gilwern	Assistant Section Leader - Squirrel Scouts
Jeremy Thomas	1st Henllys	Section Leader - Scouts
Martin Young	1st Usk (Burrium)	Assistant Section Leader - Scouts
Liz Fox-Tucker	1st Shirenewton	Section Leader - Beaver Scouts
Derek Lee	1st Sedbury and Tidenham	Assistant Section Leader - Cub Scouts
Andrew Lewis	1st Gilwern	Assistant Section Leader - Scouts
Damian Isaac	Newport	Assistant District Commissioner (Section Support) - Scouts
Ellie Fordham	Monmouthshire	District Youth Commissioner
Stephen Johnson	1st Garndiffaith (St. John's)	Section Leader - Beaver Scouts
Ellie Fordham	1st Wyesham	Assistant Section Leader - Cub Scouts
Rob Tapper	Monmouthshire	Assistant Section Leader - Explorer Scouts
Sarah Withers	Monmouthshire	District Assistant Commissioner - Inclusion
Tessa Lama	Goytre Scout Group	Group Scout Leader
Damian Isaac	28th Newport	Assistant Section Leader - Scouts
Jon Harris	Monmouthshire	Assistant Section Leader - Explorer Scouts
Tessa Lama	Monmouthshire	District Section Leader - Explorer Scouts
Natalie Marshall	1st Cwm	Assistant Section Leader - Beaver Scouts
Michael Marshall	1st Cwm	Section Leader - Beaver Scouts
Alex Hawkins	Monmouthshire	District Commissioner
Joanne Share	1st Shirenewton	Assistant Section Leader - Beaver Scouts
Joanne Share	1st Shirenewton	Assistant Section Leader - Scouts
Justine Belsten	1st Magor	Section Leader - Squirrel Scouts
Susan Monk	1st Magor	Section Leader - Squirrel Scouts
Alan Brook	1st Wentwood (Newport)	Assistant Section Leader - Scouts
Emma Henson	1st Wentwood (Newport)	Assistant Section Leader - Cub Scouts
Karen Sweet	1st Wentwood (Newport)	Assistant Section Leader - Beaver Scouts
Tracey Knapp	1st Brynmawr	Group Scout Leader
Janine Lyford	1st Magor	Assistant Section Leader - Scouts

<b>Bella Watkins</b>	Newport	Assistant Section Leader - Explorer Scouts
<b>Luke Sloan</b>	1st Caerleon (Newport)	Section Leader - Beaver Scouts
<b>Chris Arthur</b>	1st Caerleon (Newport)	Group Scout Leader
<b>James King</b>	29th Newport	Assistant Section Leader - Cub Scouts
<b>Graham McCarthy</b>	1st Wyesham	Section Leader - Beaver Scouts
<b>Richard Garner</b>	1st Wyesham	Section Leader - Cub Scouts
<b>Peter Martell</b>	26th Newport	Assistant Section Leader - Scouts
<b>Sian Phillips</b>	The Abergavenny Scout Group	Section Leader - Squirrel Scouts
<b>Nicola Richings</b>	1st Magor	Assistant Section Leader - Beaver Scouts
<b>Paul Smith</b>	1st Rogerstone	Group Scout Leader
<b>Steve McCarthy</b>	1st Marshfield	Group Scout Leader
<b>Dan Clark</b>	26th Newport	Section Leader - Scouts
<b>Shelley Clark</b>	26th Newport	Assistant Section Leader - Beaver Scouts

*\* Data only available for those holding an active role within Gwent when this report was compiled in June 2024. A number of these are data corrections where people already holding a Wood Badge have changed section/group recently, and had their training for the new appointment marked as completed on Compass.*



## **Botany Bay Campsite – Warden's Report AGM June 2024**

Bookings for the year have again been strong with the site used most weekends during the spring, summer & autumn, and some weekends during the winter. Last summer was also busy with a few longer stays by School groups prior to the School holidays, and also Scout & Guide groups during the school holidays. Verbal feedback is always positive – the leaders and young people enjoying the peace and tranquillity of the site, and the freedom the woods provide. I have noticed a couple of cancellations this year, mainly due to insufficient leader support.

### **Service Team Actions taken**

Based on the “**Safety in Scout Premises**” zoom meeting held in February, I have printed out the audit paperwork – and am slowly working my way through. One of the key points raised was the **fixed wiring check**. We had one completed on 23<sup>rd</sup> April, which highlighted no urgent actions needed. One of the recommendations was around access to the main consumer unit in Stores 1 – so a section of shelving has been removed to improve the access, and the minor points are being addressed. The annual **PAT testing** was completed in December, together with the chimney sweep & log burner inspection and fire extinguisher checks.

The **water system** has been updated to provide increased pressure (about 2.5 bar) to the buildings (not field taps) and UV filtration on demand to buildings. The next step is to UV filter the holding tank by rotating the water through the filter, which will then give UV filtration to the field taps as well. Then we can assess the water quality on UV only and compare it to the current human-intervention intensive chlorination system. We also had the pump solenoid replaced professionally.

We've had a number of **Area Work days** during the year, aiming for one every three or four months. These have not been well supported recently, but a small number of people have attended, and contributed significantly to the ongoing maintenance of the site.

A number of local scout groups have assisted the Service Crew in tackling the ongoing issue of the **Himalayan Balsam** invading the lower part of the site adjacent to the A466. This will be an ongoing issue, but I am hopeful that the task will become more manageable in a couple of years.

Since January, we have suffered from further significant damage to the camping field from **wild boar**. So far, I have asked the Scout groups staying the following weekend whether they'd be happy to do an hour or so to repair the turf, and I'm pleased to say that all groups have helped out so far.

The **lodge guttering over the balcony** has been leaking at the joints despite at least three attempts to repair and seal them. The new fittings are all slightly different, and don't fit the old gutters. The guttering & down pipes have been replaced (as the new profiles don't fit the existing down-pipes!)

After the extensive replacement of slates on roof of **Zena's Chalet**, it was noticed that several structural pieces of wood on the veranda had become rotten. The Service Team spent two days cutting out and replacing the rotten timber, and making good. This is only temporary repair – and we plan a veranda re-build project during the better weather. We've also noticed some staining on the ceiling and found a **hornet nest** in the roof space – luckily without anyone getting stung! The nest was then cleared, and then the ceiling stain proofed and repainted.

We've had the **Tree Survey** repeated around the buildings, campfire and chapel areas. This highlighted one large tree that has been professionally dead-wooded, one felled by the Service Team, and one to keep an eye on. The service crew have also felled or cleared a number of trees that came down over the winter storms, and logged and split the wood for use by site users.



Natural Resources Wales (NRW) have completed work their side of our boundary to remove a dead bow on the top Black Pine on the drive, crown lift the Beech overhanging the car park, and remove further Ash (with die back) on their land adjacent to the far corner of the camping field.

The Service Crew have also cleaned the moss off the slate roofs, cleaned the gutters, spent hours blowing and clearing dead leaves from around the buildings and car parks, repaired numerous wooden fences and dry stone walls, and have made a start on repairing and repainting the badge in the garden.

The lodge loft boarding has been extended and LED lighting improved, to aid safety during essential maintenance, and the kitchen wall unit has been re-hung.

#### **Priorities for future work**

1. Attracting more people from the local area to help with the ongoing maintenance and development of the site
  - a. This is really important, mindful of the length of service of the majority of the Service Team
  - b. Newly retired people would be ideal – to avoid poaching busy parents and scout leaders
2. Completion of the Safety in Scout Premised Audit paperwork
3. Ongoing tree work – felling / cutting up fallen or leaning trees
4. Replacement of the marquee roof with a permanent structure
  - a. I estimate that the marquee roof probably has only a couple more seasons due to tears and broken straps. I'm not convinced that it is economical to repair. The Service Team are not able to put the roof on and take it off without help. A permanent structure would require planning permission and a significant investment – but would enable the continuation of this well-used part of the site infrastructure into the future.
5. Continuing to hit the balsam to avoid further invasion
6. Widening the gap at the rear of the three cabins to enable safe working at height
  - a. Access to roof level is required for slate repairs, clearing moss and emptying gutters but there is little even ground for the ladders
  - b. Widening the gap around the cabins will enable use of the scaffold tower
  - c. This is likely to need the use of a mini-digger

The reason why we can continue to offer such cheap prices (for example £2.50p per head per night compared to £6.50p at Woodhouse Park) is due to the weekly volunteering of the service crew. However, numbers reduced in 2022 due to age, and we are desperate for new members if we are going to keep the site running safely. If you know anyone not in full time work – then please do encourage them to join the Service Crew. We currently meet on a Tuesday between 9am to mid-afternoon. You don't need to be there every week – just come when you want to / are able. Those with maintenance / DIY skills, chainsaw experience or an ability to repair 2 stroke power tools would find themselves busy, although there is also a constant stream of tasks not requiring these skills,

such as painting, cleaning, leaf blowing etc. If you'd like to help but can't make a Tuesday – please do contact me.

***Dave PHIPPS***

3<sup>rd</sup> June 2024 Email: [botanybaywarden@gmail.com](mailto:botanybaywarden@gmail.com)

# Scouts

## Blaenau Gwent



### Blaenau Gwent Lead Volunteer (District Commissioner) Report

#### AGM Report 2023/2024

This has been the hardest AGM report to ever write as I know it is going to be my last following my decision to step away from Scouting due to work and family commitments. Trying to give 100% to any business is difficult but trying to combine a hospitality business with Scouting is now becoming impossible. It was a very difficult decision and I have shed a lot of tears, but I have to put myself, my family and my business first and I can no longer give the commitment to Scouting that I need to. After almost 33 years officially as a leader and the first 18 years of my life being involved in an amazing organisation, it's going to be strange. I am truly grateful for the friendships, experiences and memories that Scouting has given me over the years. Many of these friendships may never realise the huge impact that they have had on my life and some still continuing to do so.

Anyway, enough about me here's my report for the AGM.

This past year has seen yet another increase in membership at the close of Census 2024. Squirrels were up by 4, Beavers up by 10, Cubs up by 13, Scouts up by 9. Explorers up by 2 and Adult Volunteers up by 6. Network saw a decrease of 1 which gives us an overall figure of 221 members up by 43 from 2023 Census. It may only be a small increase, but it is a positive sign for Scouting in Blaenau Gwent. I also know that both Brynmawr & Cwm have had new volunteers and I have had a very good number of enquiries come through over the last 3 months for all groups, so this figure should be higher again. Well done everyone.

Blaina HQ was finally handed back to the Council on December 11<sup>th</sup>. Thank you to everyone who gave up their time to help clear the building.

Campsite is going strong thanks to the dedication, time and commitment from Allison, Rich, Cherry & team. It's not an easy task with your own family and work commitments as well as running your sections. You are all amazing and still absolute stars. Keep those bookings coming in and hopefully our own District will make more use of it in the future.

Training has always been the hardest to sort out in Blaenau Gwent. This year has finally seen a huge turn round with all Compliance training being completed in time resulting in us getting 100% compliance reports for quite a few months now. This is something I never thought would be possible when I took on the role of DC. I know I have been a nag, but it has paid off 😊 Thank you each and every one of you.

I will end my report as I always do with my heartfelt thanks to you all. We are still and probably always will be the smallest District in Gwent, but the dedication shown by you all as volunteers never goes unnoticed. We don't like change in the beginning, but we get there, we accept it and we work with it. It just takes us a little longer than others. (we are valleys people, and we will



never change) The next few months will be different for a while, but I know that the experiences and support you give to the young people will not falter.

Volunteering is a choice, and you are all doing an amazing job. Your dedication to your groups and your young people is very much appreciated. You are all doing Blaenau Gwent proud. From the bottom of my heart, I thank you all and wish you all the best for your futures.

Amanda

09<sup>th</sup> June 2024

### Monmouthshire District Report for Gwent Area AGM 2024

2023-2024 has been a buoyant year for Scouting within Monmouthshire. I'm pleased to be reporting another strong year on census growth, with growth in adult volunteers picking up since the census numbers were recorded.

Across the board, we have seen more events, more community engagement, and activity rocketing towards pre-pandemic levels for a full recovery.

Summer 2023 also saw the return of international Scouting with 56 members having head off to the Dolomites for an action packed week of adventures. Progress is further being made on two planned international expeditions for the summer of 2024, with a possible third in the pipeline for later in the year!

### Squirrels

This year has been all about Squirrels within Monmouthshire. Since this time last year, we've opened 3 new Squirrel Dreys - bringing our total to 7! and it continues to be the section that is driving growth in both young people and adult volunteers at the highest rate.

We've also had our first four Squirrels Nights-Away events, with Squirrels venturing as far as West-Midland Safari Park for an exciting weekend away. Squirrels continues to thrive, and my personal aim is to have two more Dreys open by the end of the year.



## Beavers

Beavers has remained our strongest section across district with waiting list demand growing by the day. We've seen one additional colony open this year to accommodate growing demand, but similar is needed across the district. Lots of work has also been ongoing to recruit new Beaver leaders, and this is beginning to show some success.

Monmouthshire will be hosting our first joint Squirrel and Beaver event in July, making good use of Area's Botany Bay facility.

## Cubs

Cubs has maintained healthy numbers throughout 2023-2024, with natural growth requiring new sections that will be opening from September. Whilst we still have a substantial cub-waiting list, lots of work has brought these numbers down towards a more manageable condition.

I'm also pleased to say that we have recruited new, additional Cub leaders in over half of the cub sections!

Cubs are once again looking forwards to the return of the Evan Thomas Challenge in October, as well as the Davy cup later in the year.

## Scouts

Lots of activity has been ongoing within the Scouts sections, with the majority of groups now trying to achieve dragon awards and camping every month. In addition to this, we've seen Scouts making their mark right across Monmouthshire and beyond with groups attending Forest-Fest (a Jamboree in Sherwood Forest), a regular stream of groups heading underground, thanks to the Gwent Land Activities Team, Sailing, Canoeing, Kayaking and much, much more!

2023-2024 was also a huge year for the return of international Scouting with Raglan Scout Group taking 56 members on an international experience of a lifetime to the Dolomites in northern Italy. A selection of photos has been included below for your perusal.

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Moreover, there are two further Scout internationals in the pipeline for this summer; 2<sup>nd</sup> Caldicot troop are off the Belgium and the Battlefields, whilst Shirenewton are headed for KISC. Planning for both is in the final stages, with section B of the VA form due for signing in the next 4 weeks or so.



### **Explorers**

Explorers has once again had a strong year with plenty of activity across the sections. This year, we've seen groups competing in Monopoly runs in London, Manchester, and Bristol, as well as attending international Jamborees and continuing to support younger sections through the Young Leaders scheme.

In 2023-2024, Monmouthshire has awarded 14 top Awards to Explorers. This has included Young Leader belts, DofE Bronze awards, and Platinum and Diamond Awards.

### **Network**

Network remains steady with little activity due to a lack of DSNC and leadership team. This is something we will look to address through the delayed transformation programme. Despite this, Monmouthshire was able to celebrate Laura Willingham attending Windsor castle in April as part of her King's Scout Award presentation.

### **Tudor Cule Campsite**

Owing to significant weather damage over the winter, the decision was made to close Tudor Cule Campsite earlier in the year. This decision has been made on safety grounds as we can't presently guarantee the safety of the site.

In light of this, a programme of works has been launched to make the site safe and the site will not re-open until the risks have been properly mitigated. The public footpath has been secured and signage erected at all possible entrance points to the site, demarcating that entrance is not permitted without authorisation.

NRW visited the site on the 25<sup>th</sup> March to carry out an assessment of the damage caused to the river bank due to prior flooding, and a list of recommendations is currently under review such that the appropriate works license may be obtained.

The local community have rallied together behind the site and we've seen amazing support from the local village to help get the site back to its former glory.

There is a lot of work still to do, however we hope to have the site fully operational once again for the 2025 summer season.

Monmouthshire District Scout Council

Registered Address: 2 Castle Street, Raglan, Usk Monmouthshire NP15 2DS

Registered Charity Number 1013482 (England and Wales)

## Notable Events:

We once again had very strong attendance at the district St George's day event and have seen buoyant growth off the back of it. Some photos are below for interest.

If anyone hasn't seen the media article released following the event – I strongly urge you to have a read. It's a very nice piece that has captured the spirit of the event really well.

[https://www.abergavennychronicle.com/news/scouts-st-georges-day-parade-at-raglan-castle-681949?utm\\_term=Autofeed&utm\\_medium=Social&utm\\_source=Facebook&fbclid=IwZXh0bgNhZWQCMTEAAR2KZOQBZq5HIDgLCMxoFJu1tImJCVJJqDTsDHazXKAJ8ykBo1FwA85-aJc\\_aem\\_ARu0iNJT1Y3WDTiay6M02sOnstgag13Fp3mTw0GYZh2z\\_6LHmKEg-mbK86SDuee599ceFG0SFDe\\_1GUY7XOjLPwg#Echobox=1713975467](https://www.abergavennychronicle.com/news/scouts-st-georges-day-parade-at-raglan-castle-681949?utm_term=Autofeed&utm_medium=Social&utm_source=Facebook&fbclid=IwZXh0bgNhZWQCMTEAAR2KZOQBZq5HIDgLCMxoFJu1tImJCVJJqDTsDHazXKAJ8ykBo1FwA85-aJc_aem_ARu0iNJT1Y3WDTiay6M02sOnstgag13Fp3mTw0GYZh2z_6LHmKEg-mbK86SDuee599ceFG0SFDe_1GUY7XOjLPwg#Echobox=1713975467)



1<sup>st</sup> Sedbury and Tidenham Scout Group had the pleasure of celebrating its 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2023. To celebrate, the group hosted a group wide camp at Woodhouse Park, jam packed with activities and fun for all ages.



In addition to this, Monmouthshire once again hosted the PeaceLight on its global journey at Christmas time. A huge thank-you to Andrew Lewis from Gilwern Scout group who helped the PeaceLight on its journey, collecting it from Swindon before handing the light onwards to journey to Bethlehem (In South Wales!)

In its 37th year, the Peace Light from Bethlehem campaign was originally organised by the Austrian Broadcasting Company - ORF (Linz) - and was part of a large charitable relief mission - Light into Darkness, for children in need in Austria and abroad. Since 1986 there has been a great deal of co-operation between Scouts and Guides in many countries which has allowed the light to travel throughout Europe, such that the light is passed on to 30 European Countries and for the past few years, on to North America, Mexico and Canada. Each year, a child from Upper Austria kindles a flame from the "Eternal Flame" from the Nativity Grotto in Bethlehem where Jesus was born. The light is then flown to Austria from where it is distributed at a Service of Dedication to delegations from across Europe who take it back, with a message of Peace, to their own countries for use at ecumenical services throughout the Continent. Scouts and Guides can then take the light on to other churches, hospitals, old people homes, prisons, and places of public, cultural and political importance - to anybody that appreciates the significance of the "gift". In past years the light has been presented to Pope John Paul II, Pope Benedict XVI, Pope Francis, Mikhail Gorbatschow, the former King Hussain of Jordan, EU President Romano Prodi and other member of the European parliament in Strazbourg, the UN Troops in Kosovo and continues to be taken to Ground Zero, New York.

### **Summary**

Overall, 2023-2024 has been a very strong year for Monmouthshire Scouts and this momentum continues to drive into 2024-2025. The return of larger events and more ambitious endeavours has really picked up right across district, and that is gratifying to see at all levels.

The biggest challenge facing Monmouthshire is the ever growing waiting lists and demand for more Scouting places to be available for young people. At the time of writing, there are 341 young people on waiting lists across Monmouthshire. Adult recruitment is the single biggest blocker to enabling progress in this area and therefore remains the top priority to address.

I would like finish by extending a thank you to every single volunteer who continues to make such a difference to the lives of young people across Monmouthshire.

### **General Notes for Gwent Area Trustees Awareness.**

- District AGM pencilled in for the W/C 16<sup>th</sup> September – to be confirmed mid-July.
- Monmouthshire District Camp will be held on 13<sup>th</sup>-15<sup>th</sup> June 2025





# NEWPORT

## DISTRICT SCOUTS

Another year has flown by and Scouting in Newport has continued to grow year on year.

We started preparing for the, much anticipated, Transformation programme as Gwent was originally one of the pilot Areas for implementation. However, Gwent was withdrawn and Clwyd stepped in. Unfortunately due to the challenges presented by the digital transfer HQ ultimately decided to postpone the transfer programme. Having made considerable progress with the preparation we were left in limbo. Nevertheless Scouts Cymru gave us the go ahead to "crack on." Hence the core Team is complete with considerable work done on the constitution of the Teams. I must pay tribute to the Team of ADC's for the way they have accepted the potential changes. Hence when the green light is given across the board, we will be ready in Newport. So that changes will be less daunting to personnel I have allowed everyone to employ the new role titles so that we will all be used to them when the time comes. There are a lot of new ideas being muted by the Teams.

A number of people across the District have received National recognition for the contributions they have made to Scouting over the years. Congratulations to each and everyone of them, and a very big heartfelt thank you for all your contributions

On the financial side the District as a whole has been very fortunate. The 28<sup>th</sup> Newport applied to the National Lottery for a grant to purchase their premises, expecting them to use the match funding option, but the Lottery generously came across for the total amount allowing the 28<sup>th</sup> to make the outright purchase. Later they applied to the Welsh Government to purchase neighbouring woodland. However the Government said no but allowed them a long term lease at a peppercorn rent.

We discovered with some shock that a local man had sadly passed away and left a considerable amount of money in his will to the members of Newport Scouts. We are engaged in an exercise to determine how best to use the bequest thus leaving a long term legacy to the young people in Newport Scouts. All investigations by us and HQ have drawn a complete blank as to any reasoning for the bequest since the donor had no involvement in Scouting recorded in his younger days. Indeed it was a very kind and generous gift which the Trustees undertake to use to the benefit of the young people of Newport and with long term appreciation of the legacy.

We have achieved a number of Wood Badges through the year which bears testimony to the integrity of the adults involved in Scouting in Newport. With the support and guidance of the Training personnel we can continue to build on our successes.

Another positive factor is the development of the new Squirrel Section. We currently have four Dreys across the District. We will be opening another at the 22<sup>nd</sup> Newport on September 4<sup>th</sup>. The current Sections had a District funday at CRAI Campsite with a good attendance from the Dreys and a good lot of fun and enjoyment. Undoubtedly it will be the first of many.

Our SWAT Unit have had another successful year on the water at Llandegfedd. They continued to offer a full programme to the young people. In addition they were able to offer adults the opportunity to enhance their skills and obtain further qualifications in line with the RYA criteria.

It is a privilege to be part of a very pro-active District. I am very proud of what we have achieved together. My heartfelt thanks and appreciation goes to my Teams and their associates for all the time and effort they put into the development of Scouting in Newport. I don't forget our spouses and partners who support us. Without that support we couldn't do what we do.

To everyone.....**thankyou.**

As we look forward to the future, our actual Transformation is looming. It calls for change in the way we do things, our structure, and our titles. Let's embrace these changes together and look forward to a positive future, meeting and pursuing the.....

.....**challenge and opportunity.**

Steve Crowley

**District Commissioner/Lead Volunteer**







## Torfaen District Commissioner's Report – 2024



The last year has been another fun packed year for our young people and everyone has certainly been busy around the district.

The year kicked off with a St George's camp in Swansea, the first one for several years due to lockdown and a first time on camp for more young people than usual. Activities were split into zones with bushcraft, projectiles and games being covered. As usual there was the campfire. Unfortunately, some groups decided to leave early on the Sunday due to a bout of heavy rain overnight however we have established a great alternative venue for future events.

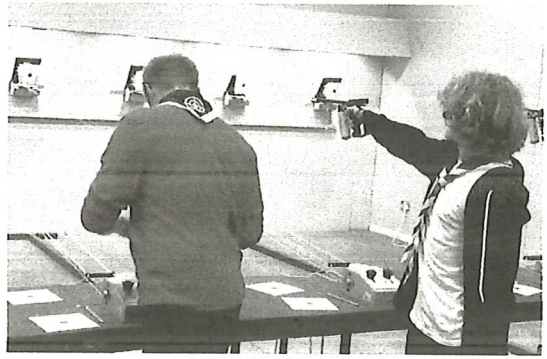


In May there was a Squirrel and Beaver hike which saw some of our younger members getting their first opportunity to get stuck in to Scouting activities. The following month was the turn of the Cubs as they headed north for the All Wales Cub Fun Day in Builth Wells which gave them a great opportunity to take part in a large scale event and appreciate wider Scouting across Wales. There were lots of activities to try and new friends to meet. The following weekend the Beavers had their district camp at CRAI. For many this was a first night away from home but they all had a great time and tasted selection of outdoor activities. In July the Cubs had their district camp, also at CRAI and it was good to see them progressing with their camp skills despite the weather not being what we had hoped for.

Over the summer many of the groups ran summer camps and three members of the district travelled to South Korea to attend the World Scout Jamboree at SaeManGeum. As was widely reported in the news this did not go exactly to plan due to the heatwave, flooding, tropical storm and inadequate planning to name a few. Hence only a few days was spent on the jamboree site and a lot of time exploring the capitol of Seoul.



The autumn was started by a splattering of groups and individuals supporting Gilwell reunion and Gwentrek. In October a group of Scouts and Explorers took part in the National Scout Rifles Competition at Bisley in a joint endeavour with Mid Glamorgan and had a very exciting weekend. The opportunity to try some more powerful guns than usual was a particular attraction of this event. Here's to next year and a bigger team.



In November everyone took part in the usual Remembrance parades and later in the month the Beavers had their movie night, this time in a small cinema which gave more appeal to the session.

In December we met in Crane St Church in Pontypool for the annual Christingle service which was lovely. The year ended with a Christmas Camp at Victoria site attended by a number of Scout troops plus the Explorers and others.

In January a team from District were invited to the Transformation conference in Cardiff. There was a lot of information about transformation but still no firm dates and nothing more has been received since then so it is still difficult to gauge how soon the new systems will be in place.

The district held its first projectiles competition in February to replace the Rifles competition and this was a great success with a large number of groups supporting this from across Torfaen and beyond. As well as rifles there were knockdowns, crossbows and hawks. The overall winning team was from Griffithstown so well done to them.

Throughout late February and March a small but dedicated team of leaders ran several taster sessions for four weeks in Coed Eva and Blenheim Schools. Well done to Gwyn and Billy for spearheading this initiative and we have certainly got some community impact and raised our profile in Cwmbran.

The year finished with a bang for the Beavers who had a great day out at the end of March. They visited Big Pit and then spent the afternoon having a picnic and hike around Garn lakes as well as an Easter Egg hunt. A very fun packed day indeed!

We have also managed to get more people through their Wood badge and are continuing to chase mandatory training modules. We now have everyone up to date on mandatory training and are keeping a close eye on upcoming renewals so we do not fall out of compliance.

Finally, our numbers are on the up both with young people and adults. We have moved out waiting lists to a central system which we can monitor at district level meaning if a group does not have spaces we can keep checking other groups and let people know sooner when a place is available. We have also opened a second Squirrel dray at Pontnewydd so this is helping with places for our youngest members.

We always like to reflect on those who have gone home over the year and it was with sadness that we lost Derek Robinson, Rob Powell and Diana Lewis this year.

A great thanks is given to all those leaders who have been doing a great job every week and giving up many of their weekends to run activities and camps. Seeing the young people making progress and learning skills for life makes the efforts all worthwhile. Thanks also to all the support from executive members, ASU members and other supporters.

Things are finally moving in the right direction, so the future is bright.

Yours in Scouting

Elaine Burrill, DC





## GWENT AREA SCOUT COUNCIL

### RECEIPTS AND PAYMENTS ACCOUNT SUMMARY FOR THE YEAR 1 JANUARY 2023 TO 31 DECEMBER 2023

	2023 £
Total monetary receipts for the period	182,072
Total payments for the period	130,262
Net receipts for the period	52,817
Bank, cash and deposit funds carried forward	108,367

These accounts were approved by the trustees of the Gwent Area Scout Council.

Approved by the Trustees on:

Signed on their behalf by Trustees:

Edward Watts

Edward Watts  
Area Chairperson

Chris Owen-Brooks

Chris Owen-Brooks  
Area Treasurer

## GWENT AREA SCOUT COUNCIL

### RECEIPTS FOR YEAR 1 JANUARY 2023 TO 31 DECEMBER 2023

Monetary receipts	2023 Total £
Scout Association Saving Fund	325
CAF Fixed Interest Fund	336
Investment Liquidation (Note 3)	58,104
Sub total – income from investments	58,765
Membership subscriptions (see Note 2)	116,790
Area events (see Note 4)	6,314
Donations	185
Miscellaneous income (Note 5)	18
Sub total – other income	123,307
Total monetary receipts	182,072



## GWENT AREA SCOUT COUNCIL

### PAYMENTS FOR YEAR 1 JANUARY 2023 TO 31 DECEMBER 2023

	<b>2023 Total £</b>
Membership subscriptions (see Note 2)	115,645
Insurance (equipment)	743
AGM expenses	314
Volunteer expenses	755
Area events (see Note 4)	8,161
Area office broadband	546
Equipment purchases (see Note 6)	1,563
International Fund Donations (see Note 7)	2,535
<b>Total payments</b>	<b>130,262</b>

### STATEMENT OF ASSETS

	<b>31 DEC 2023 Total £</b>
Gwent Main Account	97,576
Gwent Training Account	6,554
Gwent Events and Activity Account	4,237
<b>Total assets</b>	<b>108,367</b>

## **Gwent Area Scout Council**

### **Botany Bay Activity & Campsite**

#### **Financial Statement 2023**

#### **I N C O M E (£)**

Brought Forward from 2022	30063.09
Site Fees	12651.85
Donations etc	173.67
Phone	00.00

**42888.61**

#### **E X P E N D I T U R E (£)**

Maintenance	1562.94
Refund	90.00
Services	9002.59
Phone	318.62
Electric	746.02
Equipment	519.77 ( £12239.94)

Cash in Bank 31.12.23 30648.67

**42888.61**

#### **Notes:**

Donations include:- Electric Wayleave Water Payment

Maintenance includes:- Fencing, painting, step replacement and general repairs.

Services include:- Site Insurance, Grass Cutting, Fire Safety, Electrical PAT Testing, Wheelie Bins, Cesspit Clearance, Tree Survey, Chimney Sweep and Rates.

Equipment includes:-Leaf Blower, Strimmer Head and Cutting Discs etc



## Explanatory Notes

### 1 Basis of accounting

The financial statements have been prepared on a receipts and payments basis using historical costs.

Gwent Area Scout Council meets the definition of a public benefit entity under the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland.

### 2 Membership subscriptions

Membership subscription breakdown:

Scouts Cymru levy of £50.50

Gwent Area levy of 50p

was paid on 2,290 youth members.

### 3 Investment Liquidations

The following investment was liquidated because of a trustee vote to withdraw from the CAF Investment fund ISFL CAF Fixed Interest Fund B Accumulation due to its announced closure. Trustees rejected the offer to invest in alternative funds.

CAF Investment fund ISFL CAF Fixed Interest Fund B Accumulation Shares: 10,594.211

Value 30/12/2022 (Last valuation before sale): £12,389.93 (Unit price £116.950)

Value 18/07/2023 (Closing value): £12,155.61 (Unit price £114.738)

The following savings were returned by the Scouts Association as a result of the closure of "The Charity Deposit Account" saving scheme.

Gwent County Scouts Training Account - £5,552.35 (as at 21/06/2023)

Gwent County Scout Council - £40,395.79 (as at 21/06/2023)

### 4 Area events

Activity & Events:

- Young Leader residential
- Young Leader training
- Winter Camp
- Scubtrex
- Gwentrek
- Land SASU activity

## Training

- Skills for nights away
- First aid training
- Adult training

## 5 Miscellaneous Income

This relates to payments received that have been paid to Gwent Area by mistake

## 6 Equipment purchases

First aid resuscitation dolls and anti-choking trainer.

## 7 International Fund

Payments were made in line with our international fund to:

- WSJ Adult Participant
- 1st Raglan Scout Group
- White Dragon Explorers
- Roverway Adult Participant



**Independent Examiner's Report to the Trustees of the Gwent Area Scout Council (Charity no 1055372)**

I report on the accounts of the Area for the period 1 January 2023 to 31 December 2023 which comprise the Statement of Financial Accounts and related notes set out in the preceding pages.

This report is made solely to the trustees in accordance with Section 145 of the Charities Act 2011. My work has been undertaken so that I might state to the charity's trustees those matters I am required to state to them in an Independent Examiner's report and for no other purpose. To the fullest extent permitted by law, I do not accept or assume responsibility to anyone other than the charity and the charity's trustees for my examination work.

**Respective responsibilities of trustees and examiner**

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

It is my responsibility to:

- examine the accounts under Section 145 of the Charities Act),
- to follow the procedures laid down in the General Directions given by the Charity Commissioners (under Section 145(5)(b) of the Charities 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 Area 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 the 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 that 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 gives me reasonable cause to believe that in any material respect, the requirements
  - to keep accounting records in accordance with section 130 of the Charities Act; and
  - to prepare accounts which accord with the accounting records and comply with the accounting requirements of the Charities Act have not been met; or
2. to which, in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

Name: **GARETH BEALE**

Relevant professional qualification(s) or membership of professional bodies (if any): **ACMA**

Address: **THE HIGHLANDS, 19 VSK ROAD, PONTYPOOL, TORFAEN NP4 8AG**

Date: **27/05/24**