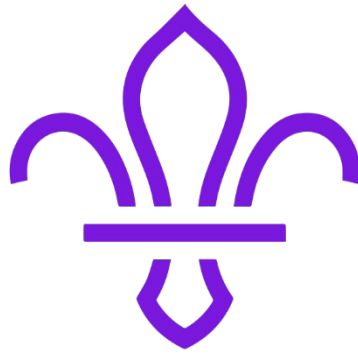


Registered Charity Number: 1110610



Scouts

Northampton

ANNUAL REPORT

2024/2025

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DISTRICT TRUSTEE BOARD

July 2024

District Chair (*Ex Officio*)

Gary Jackson / Ben Ousley

District Lead Volunteer (*Ex Officio*)

Ian Malcomson

District Treasurer (*Ex Officio*)

Caroline Lomas

District Youth Lead Volunteer (*Ex Officio*)

Liam Claris

Trustee Board Member (Elected)

Jan Brooker

PRESIDENT / VICE PRESIDENTS

July 2024

President (elect)	Dominic Goble JP DL
Vice President	Alistair Cochran
Vice President	Bernard Ingram
Vice President	Brian Bodily
Vice President	Derek Bampkin
Vice President	John Sharman
Vice President	Bob Stubbs
Vice President	Sheila Shrives
Vice President	Stuart Little
Vice President	Walter Loweth

CHAIR REPORT

Prepared by Ben Ousley and Gary Jackson, Co-Chairs

We would like to extend our heartfelt thanks to the trustee board for their unwavering dedication and support throughout this year.

The trustee board has made several significant decisions that have greatly contributed to the development and success of our organization. Among these key decisions are:

- £15,000 for the purchase of new bell boats: This investment has allowed us to enhance our fleet and provide improved resources for our activities on the water.
- £40,000 on asset development: This substantial allocation has been pivotal in the growth and enhancement of our assets, ensuring that our facilities meet the highest standards for our members and the community.

This year, we have proudly supported various events that have strengthened our community engagement and outreach. One of the highlights was our involvement in the balloon festival, an event that brought together numerous participants to showcase Scouting within Northampton.

As we reflect on this year, we are immensely grateful for the hard work and commitment demonstrated by the trustee board. Their strategic decisions and support have been instrumental in achieving our goals and advancing our mission. We look forward to another year of growth and success.

Thank you.

Co-Chairs

Gary Jackson / Ben Ousley
Board of Trustees

LEADERSHIP TEAM REPORT

This year has been somewhat of a roller-coaster ride for the District, and Scouting as a whole. Over the past couple of years, The Scouts has been wrestling with the many-headed hydra labelled Transformation, which has seen closer movement towards Charities Commission expectations, sweeping changes to our Policies, Organisation, and Rules, the introduction of a new membership system and all the alterations to our processes that entails, and changes to the very structure we, as adults, volunteer within our Scouting roles. It is unfortunate that this has not been as smooth a process as it might have been. Perhaps an element of "too much, everything, all at once". You may argue that the membership system should have been delayed even further, given its state that we have all wrestled with over the past few months. There are any number of accusations and recriminations you may lay at the feet of those involved as we, once again, are party to changes not asked for and badly delivered.

However, many of these changes were and are absolutely necessary.

We pride ourselves on the fact that we can provide adventurous activities for young people in a safe manner. The statistics broadly bear this out, with, by volume, the ratio of life-altering incidents experienced by young people engaging in similar activities organised by education establishments is noticeably higher than that of The Scouts. In other words, we engage young people in more adventurous activities with a lower life-altering incident rate than almost all youth bodies offering similar activities at usually lower volume.

But those activities are not without risk. Our processes, learning, and planning strives to reduce and otherwise mitigate risk, and run our adventurous activities without hazard. But these processes, learning, and planning only function to do so if they are followed. Not long ago, The Scouts was asked some very difficult questions, that it could not provide satisfactory answers to. On examination, the organisation as a whole was found to have a high level of non-compliance: volunteers without the required learning; processes not being followed; safety standards that looked great on paper, but were not being applied in the field.

And so, change was necessary. Despite the difficulties we now face with respect to the way in which those changes have been imposed, they have nonetheless served to provide a framework that has led our District, at the time of this writing, to a 100% compliance level. More volunteers seek advice on how to deliver activities as safely as possible. The quality and discipline of risk assessments across the board is of a high standard.

We are fortunate in Northampton, in this regard, that a culture of safety and safeguarding has been consistently promoted by our County Leads for a good number of years, and we were well on the compliance trail by the time I inherited the District. I am pleased that we have all continued to tread that trail, maintaining a high standard of compliance and safety throughout my tenure to date. It helps that, in Jan Brooker, we have a strong driving force to hold our feet to the fire of that standard.

So yes, the new membership system is not all we would want it to be.

The new processes may seem confusing and, perhaps, appear on the surface as "change for change's sake". But underpinning it all is the general philosophy all of us hold in that we want to help young people develop, and a large part of that lies in the adventures we provide - and we all want to do so to the highest, safest standards we possibly can.

But there are other benefits to the changes. The new team-based volunteering structure has enabled the District to better identify compartmentalise its responsibilities. This is something that continues to evolve, both within Scouting and the District, as new faces take on board the many challenges our unique complexities present.

The establishment of an Asset Support Team, which is not a part of the standard team structure provided by The Scouts, is an important part of that, bringing management and oversight of the assets together instead of living as independent bodies. Hopefully many of you will have seen the efforts of this team at work, at Overstone, at Yr Hen Felin, and at Fernie Fields. Our complexity as a District begins with our assets, and the efforts of the volunteers who are working within the Asset Support Team must be highly commended, in particular Ben Ousley and Gary Jackson who have taken this complex team by the horns over this past year.

The 14-24 Team is evolving in the way Explorers relates to the Groups. This is still a learning slope for many, but the results so far have come in the form of the new Alps Explorer Unit at Hunsbury, and two further Units in the works, following on from the opening of Victory Peak previously. This development has two components to it - firstly, to bring the Explorer Units closer to the Groups, and secondly (and as a by-product of that first point in part) to encourage young people to remain in Scouting beyond their tenure within a Group. The growth numbers we see in the Explorer Section show this initiative is working, but - as with everything else - the way forward involves more adult recruitment.

The Programme Team under Lou Ousley has worked to create a District Section programme this year. The broad concept being worked to is for Districts to take even-numbered years, and County to take odd-numbered years, to give each other space in which to form activities and events at those levels. However, the evolution and general chaos of Transformation has not quite given this plan room to gestate, so I am pleased that the Programme Team - with Tracy Spires and Sue Robinson-Smith supporting Cubs and Squirrels directly - have managed to fill in the gaps with some enjoyable, smaller-scale events within the 2024-2025 period.

The remainder of the teams - the Support Team, the Adult Volunteer Support Team, and the District Youth Leadership Team - continue to evolve as we understand how "what we used to do" meets with "what we do now".

Along with these evolutions within the District, the County continues to evolve and understand the new structures, and this collection of evolutions feeds into one another. As we learn, as our companion Districts learn, as our County learns, so do we. There are barriers, but there are also opportunities, and the collaborative approach is the best way to navigate through it all.

Again, as with all things Scouting, volunteers are always needed to step into all of these teams. Please come forward and talk to me or the relevant team lead, or keep an eye on the vacancy board in the new membership system for District opportunities.

As you can imagine, there are a lot of tasks the District needs to cover, and even if you only want to step up to do one small thing - that is still one small thing off the very long list most District volunteers have. Every little helps.

Through all of this chaos, the District continues to grow. Although we have yet to reach the heady heights of pre-COVID, we have an upward trend in both young people and adult membership. This year, 371 adult volunteers have helped to provide Scouting experiences for 1,191 young people, an overall growth of 1.8%.

This might not look like much, but it must be seen in context of the -24.8% drop over COVID, and the continuous upward trend in real terms we have seen since then. This growth is a testament to all of our adult volunteers, front or back of stage, who donate their time in order to facilitate Scouting activities for young people. You are all very much appreciated for what you do.

The next development phase, as we approach the end of the Skills For Life programme, promises to focus somewhat on adult recruitment - something I am sure you will agree is sorely needed. It is clear that Scouting is still relevant to this day and age - and, I would argue, is more important than ever, given the many challenges young people face in the modern world that we are absolutely well-positioned to help them through - but the ultimate limiting factor lies in the number of adult volunteers needed to meet the demand.

The future awaits.

Thank-you for your always valued contribution to Scouting within Northampton District.

Yours, in Scouting

Ian R Malcomson

District Lead Volunteer

ASSET SUPPORT TEAM REPORT

A new structure within the Asset Support Team was implemented in October 2024, with more individuals joining us. This expansion will enable us to better manage and support our assets, driving further success and improvement.

We extend our heartfelt thanks to the entire Asset Support Team for their amazing work and continued support. Your dedication and effort have been instrumental in achieving our goals and ensuring the smooth operation of our sites.

Thank you for your attention, and we look forward to another successful year ahead!

Yr Hen Felin, our mountain activity centre in Cynwyd, Wales, has had a remarkable year. We are proud to announce that this year we have again returned a healthy profit to the district, which is a testament to the hard work and dedication of our team.

We have made significant improvements to the facilities, ensuring a better experience for all visitors. Additionally, we have seen an increase in the number of district groups and young people using the site, highlighting the growing popularity and success of the centre.

Overstone Scout Campsite & Activity Centre has undergone numerous recent improvements that have enhanced the site considerably. We have developed a new den building area, initiated the creation of a story time circle, and installed new signage to guide visitors more effectively. Knights Lodge now benefits from new coat hooks at a lower height, and the renovation of Will Smith has begun.

Furthermore, compliance issues have been rectified, ensuring the site meets all necessary standards and regulations.

Fernie Fields has introduced a new wrap-around school club which provides extra income, contributing to the financial stability of the site. We have numerous plans for the year ahead, aimed at further enhancing the facilities and services offered.

Gary Jackson

Acting Asset Manager

PROGRAMME TEAM REPORT

For our first Programme Team Report, this will be a mix of the old and new. The Programme Team is made up of Section teams; Adventurous Activities (including Rifles, Archery and Bellboats); Nights Away and programme enhancing activities (such as Gang Show)

Programme Team Leaders

- Squirrel Programme Team Leader - Sue Robinson-Smith
- Beaver Programme Team Leader – VACANT Tracey Bates (acting)
- Cubs Programme Team Leader - Tracey Spires
- Scout Programme Team Leader – VACANT Lou Ousley (acting)
- Archery Team Leader – Adam Chater
- Rifles Team Leader – Neil Taverner
- Bellboats Team Leader – Chris Trasler
- Night Aways Team Leader – Pennie Crow

Activities 2024



May brought Squirrels visiting and Beavers camping at Overstone for their Superheroes Theme event. We even had a visit from Moulton Fire Station and their engine.



On Target Camp was held in June for the Scout Troops. 2



nights of camping as well as the District Shooting & Archery Competitions along with an Incident Hike.

August saw delivery of two new Scout bellboats to their home at Northampton Active. One of the boats has been purchased thanks to a donation in memory of Anne England. A huge thanks to Chris Trasler and the Trustee Board for getting this organised.

Cubs held a very successful Jamboree on the Air and Internet camp in October. This gave many of the packs in the District the chance to come together in celebration of Worldwide Scouting.



Activities 2025

Scouts and Explorers came together in February for the Big Scout Sleepout in support of Hope Centre. This year raising over £4000 for this very worthy cause. A huge thanks to Tim and Mel from 46th Northampton for taking the lead on this great event.

Nights Away

2024 saw 192 nights away offered by the sections, groups and units around the town. Well done to all those that helped to put these on, as they are a crucial part of our programme.

As a Programme Team, we aim to help groups and units across the town flourish and continue to provide activities and skills for life. A huge thanks to all the members of the Programme Team, your support is very much appreciated.

Lou Ousley and Tracey Bates

Programme Team Leads

14-24 TEAM REPORT

It has been a year of major change, with the launch of the new membership system and the change to Teams. There have been numerous challenges along the road as the old structure was retired, its seen new teams and structure being built and for the first time with the older sections of scouting we finally have a linked up seamless team structure.

Personally this has seen my existing role of DESC (District Explorer Scout Commissioner) vanish and the 14- 24 team lead arrive, although I still manage the Explorer section 14-18 I have gained over site of the Network 18-24 and the Top Awards team.

Having a wider team structure is having a positive impact on the young people who transit from Scouts to Explorers as we have been able to implement better links and great appreciation of the needs of these young people.

This year has seen a new 14-24 designated camping area created on Jay Site at Overstone, with it still being open to other bookings, it has allowed the age group to plan and implement their own ideas and take “ownership” of that area.

So far Explorers and Network members have created a new perimeter fence line with roping and stakes and a mixture of dry hedging. They plan to plant living hedge rows at a later date this year so it is in keeping with the other Overstone sites. They have dug drainage ditches to reclaim the water logged land to the bottom of the site, diverting this excess water to the stream. There are future plans to build a permanent underground oven / pizza oven in this area with the creation of a new safer fire area.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank everybody in the 14- 24 team for your dedication and support in continue to make this team fantastic and provide such a varied and comprehensive, top quality programme to all the young persons and adults, without you scouting wouldn't be what it is now. Thank you

EXPLORERS

This has been a year of development and growth for the Explorer section. We have proudly opened another Explorer Scout Unit named Alps at the Abbey Centre serving the 50th and 1st Wootton as clustered link groups, it saw a successful launch event followed by a trial four week programme. We retained all the young people who attended the trial sessions and this unit has continued to grow in numbers since, they have built a sense of ownership and belonging and have seamlessly joined in with the other units at joint events and camps.

With growth it is a rather bumpy road with gains and success in one area and a more tricky path to navigate in others, we have experienced both situations this last year, the team along with support from 11th Weston Favell and 4th Northampton as well as Hq local growth team have put considerable effort into promoting the potential launch on another unit to serve 11th, 4th, 30th and 23rd scout groups.

After a lot of meetings and team work we undertook several promotional events at Weston Favell scout hut and Weston Favell shopping centre with the aim of recruiting more young people and adult volunteers, although we have gained young people for scouting in Northampton and various adult roles we didn't manage to reach our ultimate goal. However, In true scouting tradition we have temporally parked this unit for another day in the near future as scouts never give up.

The team will shortly be engaging in talks with 36th, 34th and 22nd with the aim of launching another new Explorer unit, this looks promising as there appears to be a potential for new volunteers to join the team and ample young people. Hopefully this will be something to watch out for before this year is out. Then our team can refocus on the previous project and hopefully another time, different approach will be the golden key.

The young people have had a very busy year with new units activities and camps. They have been involved in working parties at Overstone on Jay site, The big sleep out saw them take to cardboard boxes and shelter for the night raising money for the Hope Centre, a grand day out to London running around playing life sized monopoly competing against scouts and explorers from across the UK. At Christmas the explorers took to the ice for their joint night having fun ice skating and for some being invested whilst skating!

Many Units are now having joint activities with the Scout sections to continue to improve the links to ultimately ensure they continue in on their scouting journey.

We have seen great achievements across the Explorer Section including the Young Leaders, they should all be very proud. The adult volunteers have also shown true dedication in making this possible many juggling multiple tasks in scouting and personal life. So a massive thank you to the Explorer Team.

Young Leader Programme

Young Leader Headlines and Awards this year:

Young Leader Training Evenings delivered (Modules)	12
No. of new Young Leaders who attended Module A	34
No. of Young Leaders who attended County YL Training Weekend	23
Young Leaders Belt achieved	7

Northampton District boasts 83 Young Leaders at the current time. They are a fantastic resource to their Scout Groups, and will be the Leaders of the future.

Our Young Leader Training Team delivers monthly training evenings to cover the Young Leader Modules, and most of our Young Leaders take part in the full programme. It is possible to complete the Modules over a period of 15-18 months.



To achieve their Young Leader Belt, the Young Leaders need to complete all 11 Modules plus 4 Missions to show how they have put their learning into practice. We find each group of Young Leaders who start together on Module A make good friends across the District, and try to complete their training together.

Young Leaders are automatically members of the Explorer Scout Section, and are invited to all camps and events run for the Section.

This year, the County put on a Young Leaders Training Weekend, and 23 of our Young Leaders attended part or all of the weekend. It was a useful way to complete a few outstanding Modules, or to spend a whole weekend immersed with 80 other Young Leaders covering most of the Modules in one go.

network

This year has been one of growth, pride, and recognition for Sir Gawain's Scout Network. As we reflect on the past twelve months, it is clear that our team has not only strengthened in numbers but in spirit, dedication, and community involvement. The year has seen new traditions established, major achievements by our members, and an increased presence in both local and national Scouting events.

One of the most meaningful additions to our Network this year has been the unveiling of our very own Sir Gawain's Scout Network flag. This flag is more than just a symbol; it represents our Scouting values and identity. We were proud to carry it for the first time during the Remembrance Parade, where it flew high as a mark of our respect and commitment to service.

Previously meeting monthly, the Network has now moved to weekly meetings on a Thursday, a change that has significantly enhanced group cohesion, planning, and activity opportunities. The shift has been positively received, allowing for more consistent engagement, skills development, and social interaction among members.

We are incredibly proud to highlight two major achievements by our member Emily Fletcher this year:

- **King's Scout Award:** Emily represented Sir Gawain's at Windsor, celebrating this pinnacle of Scouting achievement. Her commitment, leadership, and perseverance exemplify the values we all aspire to.
- **Duke of Edinburgh's Gold Award:** Emily was also honoured at Buckingham Palace, where she celebrated her Gold Award. Her journey is an inspiration to the Network and a testament to the personal development that Scouting fosters.

Many of our Network members also hold active roles within the other Scout sections, from Squirrels through to Explorers. Despite these commitments, they continue to fully participate in Network activities, demonstrating a deep dedication to Scouting in all its forms. Their involvement across age groups not only supports the future of Scouting but also enriches our own programme with shared knowledge and experience.

As we move into the next Scouting year, we look forward to:

- Building on our weekly programme with more adventurous and service-based activities.
- Supporting more members through their Chief Scout's, King's Scout and DofE Awards.
- Continuing to develop Sir Gawain's Scout Network, a community built on stability, leadership, a strong identity and guided by direction and a sense of duty which inspires youth to become resilient, responsible leaders, ready to serve their communities.
-

We thank all our volunteers and Network members whose enthusiasm keeps the Network thriving.

Ian Rivett,

Team Lead

Sir Gawain's Scout Network

Top Awards Programme – 14-24 Section

Top Awards presented this year:

Bronze DofE Award	9
Silver DofE Award	10
Gold DofE Award	6
Chief Scout's Platinum Award	4
Chief Scout's Diamond Award	3
King's Scout Award	3

The Section has delivered a full DofE Award training programme during the year, including:

Bronze DofE

- Bronze DofE / Chief Scout's Award Launch Evening
- Introduction to activities, assessors and recording
- Expedition Training Programme, covering navigation, food and stoves, expedition kit, map reading and route planning. Including a day and a weekend of skills training and expedition practice.
- Assessed Expedition (Northamptonshire) x 1

Silver DofE

- Expedition Launch
- Expedition route planning, over online and face-to-face meetings
- Conversion training for expeditions, for those joining from a School DofE Scheme
- Practice Expedition (Chilterns) x 1
- Assessed Expedition (Shropshire) x 1

Gold DofE (shared with the County DofE Team)

- Expedition Launch (x2)
- Expedition route planning, over online and face-to-face meetings
- Practice and Assessed Expeditions (North Wales) x 2

Our comprehensive DofE Award Programme is the basis for achieving both DofE Awards and Chief Scouts Awards. Once the participants achieve their DofE Awards, we encourage them to complete the additional requirements to also achieve their Chief Scouts Awards. The 14-25 programme is designed to include activities which can cover items from the ICV Lists (International, Community, and Values) for each Chief Scouts Award. ICVs can also be worked on as an individual, or through a Young Leader role. Examples of the activities in the programme to cover ICVs were:

- Explorer/Network Working Parties to support the development of Overstone Campsite
- Opportunities to take part in supporting the Standing with Giants installation at Stowe Gardens
- Bulb Planting opportunities
- Explorer Units taking part in maintaining local play areas for their local communities

#YouShape

VOLUNTEER DEVELOPMENT TEAM REPORT

With the implementation of Transformation and the new digital system towards the end of the year and the advent of the new Team structure, the Volunteer Development Team has evolved from the old Appointment Advisory Committee, to the new way we recruit, learn and reward our adult volunteers.

The new digital system, although still ironing out difficulties, allows volunteers to do many more tasks for themselves, enabling them to keep a track of their own scouting journey.

The introduction of the Welcome Conversation (rather than the Appointment Advisory Committee), where the groups themselves are encouraged to support the new volunteer with the help of the District, as well as volunteers from other Groups or sections is slowly taking shape.

The new digital system now allows any volunteer to recommend an Award for a colleague who they believe has gone over and above their role in scouting.

Finally, as we navigate through transformation and emerge into the “new era” of scouting, I would like to thank all the members of my team for being there for volunteers to make their lives as easy as possible.

Jan Brooker
Volunteer Development Team Lead