

1 Reference and Administration Details

Charity Name: Mersey Weaver District Scout Council
Charity Number: 1145482
Principal Address: The Heath Business and Technical Park, Runcorn, Cheshire WA7 4QX

1.1 Trustees

Jeff Shaw	District Chair
Michelle Pickstock	District Secretary
Cath Mudford	District Treasurer
Oliver Chambers	District Commissioner
Jake Vickery	District Youth Commissioner
Derek Hillbeck	Deputy District Commissioner
Andy Pearson	District Explorer Scout Commissioner
Matthew Duckett	District Network Commissioner

Mike Walker (ACM Clogwyn)	Kevin Holland (ACM DC)	
Matt Morris & Emily Morris (ACM QCW)	Emily Brown	
Ronald Sayle	Steve Lavery	Matthew Marnell
Colin Chambers	Vikki Gale	Anna Holland

2 Structure, Governance and Management

2.1 Governing Document

The District'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 (POR) of the Scout Association.

2.2 District Scout Council

The District Scout Council is the electoral body to which the District Executive Committee is accountable. Membership of the District Scout Council is open to:

- Commissioners
- District and Group Active Support Managers
- Scouters
- Administrators
- Section Assistants
- Skills Instructors
- Advisers
- all Explorer Scouts
- all members of the District Scout Network

- A representative of the Troop Leadership Forum, selected from amongst the membership of the Forum
- Representatives of each District Explorer Scout Unit, selected from amongst the membership of each Explorer Scout Unit
- A representative of the District Scout Network, selected from amongst the membership of District Scout Network
- Members and Associate Members of the Movement registered in the Scout District and including Members of District Scout Active Support Units
- all parents of Explorer Scouts;
- persons elected or reselected annually by the District Scout Council on the recommendation of the District Commissioner and the District Executive Committee
- the County Commissioner and County Chairman are ex-officio members of the District Scout Council.

2.3 Constitution

The District is a trust established under the Policy, Organisation and Rules of the Scout Association. It has a constitution agreed by the District Scout Council, but which is subservient to its governing documents.

2.4 Trustee Selection

The trustees are appointed in accordance with the District's constitution and the Policy, Organisation and Rules of the Scout Association.

2.5 District Executive Committee

The District is led by a District Commissioner and managed by a District Executive Committee. They are accountable to the District Scout Council for the satisfactory running of the District.

The Executive Committee exists to support the District Commissioner in meeting the responsibilities of their appointment.

Members of the Executive Committee must act collectively as charity Trustees of the Scout District, and in the best interests of its members to:

- Comply with the Policy, Organisation and Rules of The Scout Association
- Protect and maintain any property and equipment owned by and/or used by the District
- Manage the District finances.
- Provide insurance for people, property and equipment.
- Provide sufficient resources for Scouting to operate. This includes, but is not limited to, supporting recruitment, other adult support, and fund-raising activities.
- Promote and support the development of Scouting in the local area.
- Manage and implement the Safety Policy locally
- Ensure that a positive image of Scouting exists in the local community.
- Appoint and manage the operation of any sub-Committees, including appointing Chairmen to lead the sub-Committees

- Ensure that Young People are meaningfully involved in decision making at all levels within the District
- The opening, closure and amalgamation of Groups, Explorer Scout Units, Scout Network and Scout Active Support Units in the District as necessary.
- Appoint and manage the operation of an Appointments Advisory Committee, including appointing an Appointments Committee Chairman to lead it.
- Supervising the administration of Groups, particularly in relation to finance and the trusteeship of property.

2.6 Risk and Internal Control

The District Executive Committee has identified the major risks to which they believe the District is exposed which are:

2.6.1 Injury or adverse impact to health to Leaders, Helpers, Supporters or Members

The District supports compliance with the Safety Policy and ensures appropriate risk assessment; elimination, reduction and control measures are taken to reduce the likelihood of any injuries or adverse impact to health (including mental health). In addition, through membership fees, the District contributes to the Scout Association's national accident insurance policy.

It has been agreed in 2020 to establish a separate HS&E subcommittee to help support the DC in the development and deployment of policy and good practice in regard to health, safety and environment. A small team of volunteers was also established to support the DC in ensuring Covid risk assessments were effectively carried out across the District.

2.6.2 Damage to Buildings, Property or Equipment

The District would request the use of buildings, property and equipment from neighbouring organisations. The District has sufficient buildings and contents insurance in place to mitigate against permanent loss.

2.6.3 Reduced Income from Subscriptions and Fund Raising

The District is primarily reliant upon income from subscriptions and fund-raising. The District holds adequate reserves to ensure the continuity of activities should there be a major reduction in income. The committee could also raise the value of subscriptions to increase the District income either temporarily or permanently.

It was agreed in 2020 to institute a programme of modest fee increases over a number of years to secure sufficient funds from the District to finance its ongoing commitments.

2.6.4 Reduction or Loss of Leaders

The District is totally reliant upon volunteers to run and administer the activities of the District. If there were a reduction in the number of volunteers to an unacceptable level, then there would have to be a contraction, consolidation or closure of activities or sections.

2.6.5 Reduction or Loss of Members

If there were a reduction in membership of a particular section or the District as a whole then there would have to be a contraction, consolidation or closure of a section.

2.6.6 Internal Controls.

The District has in place systems of **internal control** that are designed to provide reasonable assurance against material mismanagement or loss, these include 2 signatories for all payments, a robust expenses policy and comprehensive insurance policies to ensure that insurable risks are covered

3 Objectives and Activities

The primary objective of the District is that of the Scout Association generally, namely:

‘As Scouts, we believe in preparing young people with skills for life. The Mersey Weaver Scout District supports Explorer Scout Units and the Scout Groups across Mersey Weaver to encourage the young people to do more, learn more and be more. Each week, we support our members by providing the opportunity to enjoy fun and adventure while developing the skills they need to succeed.’

The activities of the District are:

- The provision of the Scouting programme for 14–18 year old members (Explorers)
- The provision of scouting for 18–25 year old members (Network)
- The provision of support to Scout Groups within the District
- The provision of communication channels between Scout Groups within the District and between those Groups and the rest of the Scouting Organisation.

4 Achievements and Performance

2020 has been a very challenging year for Scouting in the District due to the impact of the international COVID 19 pandemic. This has resulted in a complete closure of face to face (f2f) scouting for much of the year and an innovative and creative move to an online Digital Scouting programme.

When circumstances allowed, a number of sections and units safely returned to f2f scouting, mainly outdoors. This return was only allowed after very careful risk assessments were developed, in line with the Government and Scout Association (SA) requirements and having developed and deployed properly communicated and understood appropriate safety and health measures.

It is a great credit to the many leaders and other volunteers who safely and successfully led scouting in the District through this challenge and continue to do so as COVID persists into 2021.

The closure of many scouting activities in the District has had a significant impact on income across the District. However, a careful programme of cost management and the diligent and successful securing of Government COVID grants have enabled the District to maintain its finances in an acceptable state and provides a financial basis to support a creative and dynamic reboot of f2f scouting across the District when circumstances allow.

In parallel with the COVID safe return to scouting, the SA has initiated a drive to ensure that all scout premises are in a safe condition to allow a return to f2f. This addresses not only COVID security but also Fire Risk Assessment, Electrical Safety, Asbestos, amongst others. A programme of risk assessments and inspections have been initiated at all three of the District Activity Centres. In many cases these inspections have revealed areas requiring improvement.

Thanks to the Government grants, our ability to draw on reserves, and the amazing resourcefulness and willingness of volunteers, we have, despite the challenging times, been able to make significant safety improvements. These improvements have resulted in the improved facilities being in a sufficient state to compliantly support a safe return to scouting activities. Further process improvements are planned to ensure these good levels of compliance can be maintained. As noted

above this includes the District establishing a separate HS&E subcommittee to oversee this continuous improvement.

The District is not only focusing on the physical wellbeing of our young people, our volunteers and our physical assets, we are also addressing the very pressing topic of mental wellbeing. It is widely expected that there will be a major adverse impact on mental wellbeing as a consequence of the pandemic, and this on top of an already significant challenge prior to it. To address this the District have committed to developing a mental health programme, using the MHFA resources, for its young people and volunteers. A plan has been developed, led by our District Youth Commissioner, and personnel identified to be trained as MHFA Instructors, who can then plan a roll out programme across the District in 2021.

The Census in 2020 saw the district grow by 2.7% with significant growth in the Explorer section. However, it is widely expected that due to COVID there will be a sizeable drop in youth membership in 2021.

Again, despite the COVID impact there has been further development with the District Units with the opening of a new Explorer unit, Draco, based at QCW. This new Unit will offers the explorer programme on an alternative meeting night to the existing units and serve groups in the south of the district, who would otherwise have had to travel quite far to the next nearest unit. We have also started to closer align the four units across the District and encourage, as much as has been possible this year, joint scouting.

Sadly, the pandemic has caused major disruption across the Active Support Units (ASUs), with for example the necessity to cancel the Cheshire Hike due to the bad weather which disrupted events at the start of the year. There has been no possibility to use the mobile climbing wall, however the opportunity has been taken to carry out major refurbishment to the wall. Activities were sustained where possible with the Target Sports ASU, especially rifle and pistol shooting, continuing to offer exciting challenges and managing to squeeze in 10 sessions and enter two competitions prior to the suspension of face to face activities in March.

The Technology ASU has been crucial this year in helping support the successful deployment of the online Digital Scouting programme. The platform and available tools have been resilient throughout the year and great credit is due to the small team who have helped create and support this excellent infrastructure, which has been a lifeline for scouting in the District. Further highlights in 2020 were: the further successful deployment of OSM; the installation and commissioning of internet connectivity at QCW (also supporting the security of this remote site); and the development and deployment of a platform to support safety inspections across the District (Fat Finger). The team also made available their WordPress theme to other Scout groups, districts and counties which has generated a small income for the district.

Another highlight for 2020 has been the final consolidation and modernisation of the District banking arrangements. This multi-year programme is now complete leaving the District with a much simpler, robust, responsive and secure platform for the future. An outcome of this work has been the ability to finalise the 2020 finances and issue accounts to the IE within 1 month of the year closing. Great credit is due to our Treasurer who has led this project. Regrettably, the progress with the next step to implement XERO to further support the integration of financial tools in the District has been delayed by the pandemic, but it is hoped that this can be progressed in 2021.

Our Awards Advisory Panel continued to do an excellent job identifying scouters across District to be recognised for their service and contribution. This year we were able to recognise the



achievements of 35 adults with adult awards! 11 Commissioner's Commendations, 16 Commendations for Good Service, 3 Awards of Merit, 1 Bars to the Award for Merit, 1 Silver Acorn, 1 Bar to the Silver Acorn and 1 Silver Wolf! Special mention to Graham Bowden, Sandra Markey, Jane Duley and most notably Roger Owens. In addition, three 1st Helsby Scouts were awarded the Chief Scout's Personal Award for their bravery in standing up to anti-social behaviour in the local community.

Sadly, the pandemic saw the initial postponement and then ultimate cancellation of the international EuroJam camp. This is despite a heroic effort by the Unit to raise nearly all the funds required and for the leadership team to be well prepared for the venture. It has clearly been a great disappointment to the Unit as a whole and there have been some financial losses. However, plans are in hand by the team to plan an exciting UK camp and a short trip overseas as and when the national conditions allow. As well as funding the UK camp and overseas trip, some of the funds will be used for older members to support an Explorer Belt in 2022.

A consequence of the year has been a very low usage of the of the minibuses but careful cost management has minimised the financial impact.

The District Scout Shop has continued to develop and despite a lower turnover has continued to make a healthy contribution to the District funds.

2020 has seen the continued support to the quarterly District Section meetings. These continue to be well received and are helping improve communication and create a wider involvement in shaping scouting developments in Mersey Weaver.

Despite the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, we have seen the successful appointment of a number of key roles in the district that will stand us in good stead for the future. The appointments included a Youth Commissioner (Jake Vickery) and a Deputy Youth Commissioner (Josh Foulger), an Appointments Chair (Richard Tiplady), Queen Charlotte's Wood Activity Centre Managers (Matt & Emily Morris), District Scout Network Commissioner (Matthew Duckett) and Communications Manager (Steve Walker).

5 Financial Review

5.1 Reserves Policy

The District has undertaken a review of its potential liabilities in the face of foreseeable risks and has currently determined that a reasonable sum to hold in reserve is one year's District operating costs: nominally £90 000.

Despite investment in new facilities, the current reserves remain significantly higher than this amount at £234,909. Of this sum, £59,186 is Designated, including the funds raised for our international fund, was expected to be spent in 2020 but which will not now be spent until 2021, and £24,753 is Restricted. A significant investment has been made this year on the necessary development of the QCW and Clogwyn activity centres and the upgrading of the District Scout Centre, offset by help from Government grants. More investment will potentially be required, especially at the District Centre. However, the developments in 2020, and now 2021, regarding the Covid19 pandemic, have justified our prudent approach and will allow us to support groups who have been impacted by the pandemic as well as provide financial assistance to families in hardship

where cost may have otherwise been a barrier to participation. The financial implications of helping assist a successful return to f2f scouting across the District will require careful assessment before any further significant investments are committed.

We will continue to support exciting activities and events to enhance the provision of scouting in the District. These continue to be proposed, approved and tracked using our project proposal and approval process.

In addition, and very importantly, the District continues to support the training and development of leaders (e.g. MIDAS training for safe use of the Minibuses), and international activities through dedicated funds.

5.2 Investment Policy

The District has adopted a low risk strategy and all funds are held in cash using only mainstream banks or building societies or The Scout Association's Short Term Investment Service.

An Investment Policy has been established to reflect this strategy

6 Declaration

The trustees declare that they have approved the trustees report above.

Signed on behalf of the charity's trustees:

Signature:



Date:

26/02/2021

Full Name: Oliver Chambers

Position: District Commissioner

Signature:



Date:

26/2/2021

Full Name: Jeff Shaw

Position: District Chair

INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S REPORT ON THE ACCOUNTS

Accounting Period

I report on the accounts of Mersey Weaver District Scout Council for the period 1st January to 31st December 2020.

Respective responsibilities of trustees and examiner

The charity's trustees are responsible for the preparation of the accounts. The charity's trustees consider that an audit is not required for this year under section 144 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 Commission (under section 145(5)b of the Charities Act, and
- to state whether particular matters have come to my attention.

Basis of independent examiner's report

My examination was carried out in accordance with general Directions given by the Charity Commission. An examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the charity and a comparison of the accounts presented with those records. It also includes consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts, and seeking explanations from 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 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.



Alec Hough
5 Campbell Avenue, Runcorn, Cheshire, WA7 4SW

16 February 2021