

Trustees Annual Report

01 Jan 2021 – 31 Dec 2021

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

2 Trustees

Jeff Shaw	District Chair
Michelle Pickstock	District Secretary
Cath Mudford	District Treasurer
Oliver Chambers	District Commissioner
Jake Vickery	District Youth Commissioner
Andy Pearson	District Explorer Scout Commissioner (Part)
Matthew Duckett	District Network Commissioner

Mike Walker (ACM Clogwyn)	Kevin Holland (ACM DC)
Matt Morris & Emily Morris (ACM QCW)	Ronald Sayle
Andy Wheeler	Colin Chambers
Anna Holland	

3 Structure, Governance and Management

3.1 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.

3.2 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.

3.3 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.

3.4 Trustee Selection

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

3.5 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.

3.6 Risk and Internal Control

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

3.6.1 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.

In 2020 a separate HS&E subcommittee was established to help support the DC in the development and deployment of policy and good practice in regard to health, safety and environment.

3.6.2 Damage to Buildings, Property or Equipment

Should this impact on the operation of a Group or Unit, 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.

3.6.3 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 finances its ongoing commitments, the first step of which was taken in 2021. However due to the very challenging financial environment for 2022, it has been agreed to hold the District fees at the 2021 rate. Further increases will be implemented when they are deemed affordable.

3.6.4 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.

The biggest challenge to both maintaining and growing scouting provision in the District is the shortfall of adult leaders and volunteers, especially taking account the increasing age of many of the key leaders. To help try and address this challenge the District have committed to a full-time paid Growth and Development Officer (GDO), hired by the Region but fully financed from District reserves. This commitment is initially for one year, but assuming the role has a positive impact on scouting growth, funding for future years will be sought.

3.6.5 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.

At this time there are very healthy waiting lists for YPs to join scouting, often constrained by a shortage of adult volunteers, see 2.6.4.

3.6.6 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 dual signatories for all payments, a robust expenses policy and comprehensive insurance policies to ensure that insurable risks are covered

4 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.

5 Achievements and Performance

2021 has again been a challenging year for Scouting in the District with the continued impact of the international COVID 19 pandemic. Whilst 2020 saw an almost complete closure of face to face (f2f) scouting, 2021 did see a widespread return to f2f scouting. Whilst some Groups in the District were able to take advantage of the reduction in restrictions earlier than others, all Groups and Units were meeting back together f2f by the end of the year.

When circumstances allowed a safe return f2f, this continued to be managed carefully taking account of all the guidance available from the Government and Scout Association (SA).

Once again it is great credit to the leaders and other volunteers across the District who safely and successfully led scouting in the District and especially the return to f2f.

The constraints on scouting activities in the District continued to have an impact on income across the District. However, sustaining the careful programme of cost management and the continued success in securing Government COVID grants enabled the District to maintain its finances in an acceptable state and provided a financial basis to support a creative and dynamic reboot of f2f scouting across the District in the year.

As noted in the 2020 report, the process for COVID safe return to scouting was also implemented hand in hand with a drive to ensure that all scout premises were in a safe condition to allow both a return to f2f and to ensure safe facilities for the future. This addressed Fire Risk Assessment, Electrical Safety, Asbestos, amongst many others. A

programme of risk assessments and inspections was implemented at all three of the District Activity Centres with areas requiring improvement identified.

As noted previously, the Government grants, along with an ability to draw on reserves, and the continued resourcefulness and willingness of volunteers, have allowed the District to make significant safety improvements during 2021. These improvements have resulted in the improved facilities being suitable to support a safe return to scouting activities. Further process improvements have been started to ensure these good levels of compliance can be maintained with a comprehensive safety audit of QCW, overseen by the HS&E subcommittee. This identified a few improvements still to be completed at QCW. There is a commitment in 2022 to extend the audit to the District Centre and Clogwyn.

Whilst effort has been sustained towards improving the physical assets, considerable progress has been made on mental wellbeing. Under the leadership of Jake Vickery, the District have developed a mental health programme for its young people and volunteers. Several initial training events have been run with very positive feedback and a range of resources provided to support badge work in the Groups. Overall engagement across the District has been slower than was hoped but a combination of further events and more marketing throughout 2022 is expected to have a beneficial impact.

The Census in 2021 saw the district grow by 2.2%, which was not expected and given the circumstances is a tremendous credit to all the leaders and volunteers across the District. There is a lot of variation across the different sections with continued growth in Explorers and Beavers and the positive impact of Squirrels and reductions in Cubs and Scouts. It is expected that as Groups start to get more back to normal operations it will be enable a return to growth in all areas.

As noted above, a highlight of 2021 was establishing the first Squirrel Drey in the District at 1st Helsby. This has been very popular and was full of both young people as well as lots of helpers almost overnight. Interest was being shown not only locally but from areas well outside the District. It is planned to open further Dreys in the Central and Northern parts of the District in 2022.

The Explorer units have continued to get more back to normal. The new Unit Draco is doing well, and it has been particularly encouraging to see the Units starting to work together in programme ideas.

As f2f scouting returns a key factor to enable further growth in the District, and hence provide even greater opportunity to YP to benefit from all that scouting offers, is the shortage of adult volunteers, both uniformed and support roles. After much reflection and benchmarking by the District Leadership Team and the Executive the conclusion was reached that two things were essential; a review of the structure of Groups and their Leadership across the District and help in securing more adult volunteers from the local community.

Trustees Annual Report

01 Jan 2021 – 31 Dec 2021

To support these goals the District Team developed some outline ideas on organisation and initiated workshops and discussion across the wider Group Leadership teams during the year. In addition, it was concluded that a full time Group Development Officer, recruited by Region, but financed from the District should be explored as a means of tackling the recruitment challenge. After much discussion, and based on the strong financial position, the Executive Team committed to funding a GDO for one year, given this is a success, funding for further years would be sought. Given the very positive support from Regional Development Team, progress is expected in early 2022 with the recruitment of a GDO. Once in position further discussions on optimum structure for scouting across the District will be progressed with the Groups.

Once again Sadly, the pandemic caused further disruption in 2021 across the Active Support Units (ASUs), with for example the Cheshire Hike being cancelled again. There was also little use of the mobile climbing wall although except for a brief period over the summer when our fundraising team were able to use it at a few community events. Activities were sustained where possible with the Target Sports ASU, especially rifle and pistol shooting, once again continuing to offer exciting challenges.

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. The installation and commissioning of internet connectivity has been rolled out to both Clogwyn and District Centre (also supporting the security of both sites). The team's also WordPress theme continues to generate a small income for the district.

Thanks to our Treasurer, the overall finances have continued to be managed in a prudent and professional manner, with expenses settled promptly; the simplification of the finance processes also led to a very accurate and speedy closure for the year end accounts to the full satisfaction our new IE. Sadly, due to a number of different circumstances and despite much effort, the resolution of Gift Aid applications remains outstanding and the progress with implementing XERO, to further support the integration of financial tools in the District, has been further delayed. Progress is targeted for 2022.

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 40 adults with adult awards! 10 Commissioner's Commendations, 27 Commendations for Good Service, 4 Awards of Merit, 1 Bars to the Award for Merit. In addition, a Scout from 10th Widnes was awarded the Cornwall Award for her outstanding bravery, patience and positivity beyond her years in the face of great personal adversity. We also saw 10 of our volunteers/groups recognised by the High Sheriff of Cheshire for their outstanding contribution during the Pandemic.

2020 sadly saw pandemic cancellation of the international EuroJam camp. However in 2021, thanks to the tireless efforts of Andy Hill and his team, the YP were able to benefit

from attending an exciting multi location UK camp that took place along the south coast of England starting in Cornwall and finishing Portsmouth. In addition, many of the YP involved in Eurojam have now applied for WSJ 2023 and the Cheshire Explorer Belt 2023. With some of over 18's who were unable to take part in the alternative EuroJam experience embarking on an Explorer Belt in the Summer of 2022.

2021 has once again seen a limited usage of the of the minibuses and despite careful cost management has resulted in a significant financial impact. On a positive note, booking did pick up late in the year and there has been increased external interest in their hire for the future.

The District Scout Shop has continued to develop with a strong year's turnover and is making a very healthy contribution to the District funds.

2021 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. With the success of virtual meetings it is the intention that these will now alternate between face to face and virtual.

6 Financial Review

6.1 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 £233,665. Of this sum, £60,984 is Designated, which includes funds raised for our international fund, and £19,888 is Restricted. Further investments have been made this year on the necessary development of the QCW, Clogwyn and the District Scout Centre, helped by further Government grants. Despite District provision being available, the commitment to support groups badly impacted by the pandemic was not required. Returning to f2f scouting also proved less of a drain on District finances than was feared. This had left the District able to commit to funding the GDO.

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.

Trustees Annual Report

01 Jan 2021 – 31 Dec 2021

6.2 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

7 Declaration

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

Signed on behalf of the charity's trustees:

Signature: 

Date: 25/04/2022

Full Name: Oliver Chambers

Position: District Commissioner

Signature: 

Date: 26/4/2022

Full Name: Jeff Shaw

Position: District Chair

**Mersey Weaver District Scout Council
Income & Expenditure Statement**

31 st December 2020					31 st December 2021				
Total £	Unrestricted £	Designated £	Restricted £	INCOME	Total £	Unrestricted £	Designated £	Restricted £	
60,880.00	60,880.00	-	-	- Membership subscriptions	57,119.25	57,119.25	-	-	
936.88	936.88	-	-	- Investment Income received	0.00	0.00	-	-	
46,273.75	250.00	42,247.50	3,776.25	Donations and grants	47,839.25	0.00	44,614.00	3,225.25	
13,491.58	0.00	13,491.58	-	- Fund Raising	9,657.41	0.00	9,657.41	-	
15,198.80	15,198.80	-	-	- Activities / Projects	18,779.96	18,779.96	-	-	
7,701.35	7,701.35	-	-	- Fees and Charges	16,767.14	16,767.14	-	-	
606.69	606.69	-	-	- Other Income	50,763.11	50,763.11	-	-	
145,089.05	85,573.72	55,739.08	3,776.25	Total Income	200,926.12	143,429.46	54,271.41	3,225.25	
EXPENDITURE									
37,982.00	37,982.00	-	-	- Membership Fees	35,070.50	35,070.50	-	-	
43,845.06	43,845.06	-	-	- Premises	43,293.43	14,202.09	29,091.34	-	
3,989.20	510.15	-	3,479.05	Donations & Grants	9,728.07	1,637.68	-	8,090.39	
17,017.82	0.00	17,017.82	-	- Fund Raising	22,136.97	0.00	22,136.97	-	
16,433.36	1,533.35	14,900.01	-	- Activities / Projects	21,163.34	21,163.34	-	-	
13,868.93	13,868.93	-	-	- Administration	13,623.65	13,623.65	-	-	
0.00	-	-	-	- District Officials Expenses	0.00	-	-	-	
455.00	205.00	250.00	-	- Sundry Expenditure	51,686.00	50,348.32	1,337.68	-	
6,098.67	6,098.67	-	-	- Equipment	5,468.39	5,468.39	-	-	
139,690.04	104,043.16	32,167.83	3,479.05	Total Expenditure	202,170.35	141,513.97	52,565.99	8,090.39	
5,399.01	-18,469.44	23,571.25	297.20	Income less Expenditure	-1,244.23	1,915.49	1,705.42	-4,865.14	

31 st December 2020					31 st December 2021				
Total £	Unrestricted £	Designated £	Restricted £	ACCUMULATED FUNDS	Total £	Unrestricted £	Designated £	Restricted £	
229,510.45	169,436.09	35,617.81	24,456.55	Reserves brought forward	234,909.46	150,966.65	59,189.06	24,753.75	
-	-	-	-	Prior Year re-allocation	-	-	-	-	
5,399.01	-18,469.44	23,571.25	297.20	Income less Expenditure	-1,244.23	1,915.49	1,705.42	-4,865.14	
234,909.46	150,966.65	59,189.06	24,753.75	Reserves carried forward	233,665.23	152,882.14	60,894.48	19,888.61	
REPRESENTED BY									
150,849.84	129,604.84	-	21,245.00	Scout Short Term Investment Account	200,849.84	130,961.23	50,000.00	19,888.61	
97,604.92	34,907.11	59,189.06	3,508.75	Bank Balance at close per bank	37,980.93	27,086.45	10,894.48	0.00	
0.00	0.00	-	-	- Receipts not on bank statement	82.61	82.61	-	-	
-13,545.30	-13,545.30	-	-	- Payments not on bank statement	-5,248.15	-5,248.15	-	-	
84,059.62	21,361.81	59,189.06	3,508.75	Cash Book Balance	32,815.39	21,920.91	10,894.48	0.00	
234,909.46	150,966.65	59,189.06	24,753.75	Total Represented By	233,665.23	152,882.14	60,894.48	19,888.61	

Cath Mudford
Mersey Weaver District Scout Treasurer

Eric Bennett
Independent Examiner

C E M

12/2/2022

EBennett

12.2.22