

## **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 (Part year)
Cath Mudford	District Treasurer
Oliver Chambers	District Commissioner
Jake Vickery	District Youth Commissioner
Matthew Duckett	District Network Commissioner

Mike Walker (ACM Clogwyn)	Kevin Holland (ACM DSC)
Matt Morris & Emily Morris (ACM QCW)	Ronald Sayle
Andy Wheeler	Colin Chambers
Ben Nugent	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 Trustee Board 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 Trustee Board
- 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 Trustee Board**

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

The Trustee Board exists to support the District Commissioner (Lead Volunteer) in meeting the responsibilities of their appointment.

Members of the Trustee Board 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 Trustee Board 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.

A separate HS&E subcommittee is in place to help support the DC in the development and deployment of policy and good practice regarding health, safety, and environment.

### **2.6.2 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.

### **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 cost of subscriptions to increase the District

income either temporarily or permanently, recognising the potential risk to membership numbers, especially in this period of COL crisis.

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, the first step of which was taken in 2021. Due to the very challenging financial environment for 2022, it was agreed to hold the District fees at the 2021 rate, however a further modest fee increase has been agreed for 2023.

#### **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.

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 was initially for one year (2022-2023). Given the positive impact the GDO is starting to have on scouting growth in the District during the first year, it has been agreed to fund the GDO for a further year. Sufficient funds are available to finance the second year of the GDO, without an unacceptable reduction in reserves. However, external funds are being sought in 2023 to support the GDO initiative not only for 2023-2024 but hopefully for further years.

#### **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.

At this time there are healthy waiting lists of young people wishing to join scouting, often constrained by a shortage of adult volunteers, see 2.6.4. In addition, the role of the GDO is also to attract further young people to become involved in scouting.

#### **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 dual signatories for



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.

In setting the objectives and planning activities the Trustees have considered and taken account of the Charity Commission’s public benefit guidance.

### **4 Achievements and Performance**

2022 has been a year of recovery as scouting in the District has emerged from the impact of the international COVID 19 pandemic. Groups and Units have been meeting back together f2f and endeavouring to get activities back to normal. It has again been of great credit to the leaders and other volunteers across the District who have safely and successfully led the recovery of scouting across the District. These achievements were marked in mid 2022 with an awards event at QCW to celebrate the amazing volunteering being done in scouting across the District.

A highlight for 2022 has been the planned recruitment of a full time Group Development Officer and, under the direction of a programme board, the successful start to the programme of work to drive further growth. A review of progress to date has led the initial commitment to funding a GDO for one year (2022-2023) being extended for a further year (2023-24). External support funding is being pursued in 2023 to help fund not only 2023 but hopefully extending this further.

Alongside the GDO recruitment, and in support of Growth in the District, both creating the opportunities for YP and securing the volunteers to enable this, the work on optimising the structure of Groups and their Leadership across the District has been progressed. Initial thinking

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was shared in constructive workshops across the District, from which valuable feedback was gathered and collated. Alongside this work has been the emerging picture of the imminent strategic transformation of scouting as a whole. This transformation will have an impact on the appropriate approach for Mersey Weaver as well will happen concurrently. As such the shaping and management of these change will be progressed in an integrated way. Further progress on these changes is planned for 2023.

The Census in 2022 saw the district grow by 3.9%, with the largest growth of adult volunteers in 22 years (9.5%) this was not expected but it a tremendous credit to all the leaders and volunteers across the District as well as Andrew our new Local Growth Officer. There is a lot of variation across the different sections with continued growth in Squirrels, Beavers and Cubs. It is expected that next year we will be back to pre-pandemic levels.

2021 saw the successful establishment of the first Squirrel Drey in the District at 1<sup>st</sup> Helsby. As planned, 2022 saw the District establish its second successful drey at 4<sup>th</sup> Runcorn and waiting lists across the District indicate a wide demand for more dreys. As part of the GDO programme of work, a review has been undertaken and it is planned to open further Dreys in the Central and Northern parts of the District in 2023.

The Explorer units have continued to operate more normally. The Draco Unit, opened in 2021, has gone from strength to strength, although this had a detrimental impact on the numbers at the Beacon Unit. 2022 has again seen Units collaborating on programme ideas, which is great news. As part of the Growth initiative, it is planned to strengthen Explorers further in 2023, with a focus on seeking new volunteers to help deliver the programme.

Further progress has been made on mental health wellbeing. Under the leadership of the DYC, Jake Vickery, the mental health programme developed in 2021 was further rolled out to its young people and volunteers. This was enhanced by a successful Mental Wellbeing weekend attended by over 100 young people at QCW. The event benefited from financial support from CWAC, for which the District were very grateful. Despite this excellent work the overall engagement across the District has been lower than hoped. It is planned to progress this work further in 2023 as the issue of mental wellbeing continues to be a priority. At the start of this new year Jake Vickery handed over the reins to Grace Wheeler after an opportunity to take on a role on the UK Youth Commissioner Team. We are very excited about what Grace will bring to the role and would also like to thank Jake for all his work in 2022, we are sure he will have a great impact in his new role too!

International scouting has continued to be supported. The first independent Explorer Belt expedition was successfully completed by 4 YP; the WSJ 2023 contingent have continued to carry out preparation, training, and successfully raise funds for the 2023 Jamboree, with the team now confident that the challenging financial target will be met; MWSD YP have successful been selected for the 2023 County Explorer Belt and are active in preparation and training; many YP and leaders attended and supported the highly successful 2022 Cheshire Scouts Chamboree.

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Exciting scouting programmes have once again started to be supported by the Active Support Units (ASUs), with particular success for Target Sports. Not only have YP been active in developing their shooting skills, locally and nationally, the ASU were successful in securing a grant to construct an excellent new target sports range at QCW. This will enhance not only the capability of the ASU to support enhanced programmes, but further add to the attractions offered by QCW. The Climbing ASU have once again been able to support the mobile CW attending various fund-raising events, where it is always a popular attraction; Hill walking team continue their support of Cheshire hike practices; and we also welcome Josh Foulger as the new team leader for the long planned Water sports ASU, it is hoped this new team will have an impact in 2023 by enabling more opportunities for young people to get on the water.

The Technology ASU continues to offer excellent digital services to our groups and activity centres with further investment made in our physical infrastructure at our three activity centres to improve internet access and safety.

A careful programme of cost management was sustained again in 2022, with continued success in securing a final phase of Government COVID grants. This enabled the District to further invest in its main assets at QCW, Clogwyn and the District Centre addressing safety matters and facility developments that will enhance scouting provision for the future.

Work has also continued on the programme of safety risk assessments and inspections (notably Fire, Electrical, and Asbestos). The post audit remedial work at QCW has being substantially progressed to completion. Thanks to the local support team, QCW also saw the completion of an excellent new campfire circle with associated pizza oven. This was created as a tribute to April Nicholas, past DC and driving force behind QCW for many years who sadly passed away in 2021.

The planned audits for Clogwyn and the DSC were postponed into 2023 to allow for other remedial work to be completed first. Notable developments at Clogwyn have been the safety audit and major overhaul of the internal Climbing Wall, and at the DSC, the safety review and major refurbishment of the entrance hall ceiling and roof. In addition, the DSC main hall roof was internally sealed and insulated.

2022 has finally been a turn-around year for the usage of the of the minibuses. Thanks to great efforts from the Transport Manager (Kevin Holland) and the Booking Secretary (Ben Nugent), bookings have been strong, though mainly from outside of the District. The outcome has been a positive contribution, for the first time ever, and a start made to building up a reserve for future replacements. In support of minibus use, the District has continued to support MIDAS training for safe use of the Minibuses.

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 of our IE. Despite considerable effort, the resolution of Gift Aid applications remains outstanding. Face to face discussions have been held with HMRC, the District remains hopeful that progress will be made in 2023. The plan to implement XERO, to further support the

integration of financial tools in the District, has been further delayed and will be assessed again in 2023.

The District Scout Shop has continued to operate helping provide cost effective scouting equipment to the people across the District.

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 24 adults with adult awards! 8 Commissioner's Commendations, 10 Commendations for Good Service, 5 Awards of Merit.

The Appointments Advisory Committee (AAC) have been operating effectively in 2022 with four new volunteers. We have seen the successful appointment of several key roles in the district that will stand us in good stead for the future.

## **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 minimum sum to hold as reserves is one year's District operating cost: nominally £90 000.

2022 has seen further investment in the District facilities, as well as in the GDO. Consequently, whilst the year end funds (£200,934) are higher than the agreed reserve level, they are a significant reduction since 2021. In addition, of the end of year sum, £71,843 is Designated, which includes funds raised for international camps and £23,489 is Restricted leaving unrestricted funds at £105,602 compared to the agreed minimum reserves level.

It has been agreed that the District will continue to fund the GDO throughout 2023 and into 2024. External support funding will be sought, but without this it is acknowledged that a further depletion of reserves will occur. Therefore, non-essential development of the Activity Centres has been put on hold for 2023.

The District 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.

### **5.2 Investment Policy**

The District has adopted a low-risk strategy with all funds held in cash, using only mainstream banks or building societies or The Scout Association's Short-Term Investment (STI) service. It has been acknowledged that the returns in the STI have been disappointing and so alternative low risk investment accounts will be explored to secure a better return.

An Investment Policy has been established to reflect this strategy.

# Trustees Annual Report

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### 6 Declaration

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

Signed on behalf of the charity's trustees:

**Signature:**



**Date:** 28 April 2023

Full Name: Oliver Chambers

Position: District Commissioner

**Signature:** *JMShaw*

**Date:** 28 April 2023

Full Name: Jeff Shaw

Position: District Chair



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

31 <sup>st</sup> December 2021				INCOME	31 <sup>st</sup> December 2022			
Total £	Unrestricted £	Designated £	Restricted £		Total £	Unrestricted £	Designated £	Restricted £
57,119.25	57,119.25	-	-	- Membership subscriptions	61,188.50	61,188.50	-	-
0.00	0.00	-	-	- Investment Income received	206.29	206.29	-	-
47,839.25	0.00	44,614.00	3,225.25	- Donations and grants	37,812.90	24,423.40	9,789.00	3,600.50
9,657.41	0.00	9,657.41	-	- Fund Raising	39,062.75	-72.75	39,135.50	-
18,779.96	18,779.96	-	-	- Activities / Projects	37,316.81	37,316.81	-	-
16,767.14	16,767.14	-	-	- Fees and Charges	40,784.47	40,784.47	-	-
				Equipment	5,659.20	5,659.20	-	-
				Administration	3,209.06	3,209.06	-	-
50,763.11	50,763.11	-	-	- Other Income	46.50	46.50	-	-
<b>200,926.12</b>	<b>143,429.46</b>	<b>54,271.41</b>	<b>3,225.25</b>	<b>Total Income</b>	<b>225,286.48</b>	<b>172,761.48</b>	<b>48,924.50</b>	<b>3,600.50</b>
EXPENDITURE								
Total £	Unrestricted £	Designated £	Restricted £		Total £	Unrestricted £	Designated £	Restricted £
35,070.50	35,070.50	-	-	- Membership Fees	38,408.00	38,408.00	-	-
43,293.43	14,202.09	29,091.34	-	- Premises	46,787.84	40,097.04	6,690.81	-
9,728.07	1,637.68	-	8,090.39	- Donations & Grants	1,928.78	0.00	1,928.78	-
22,136.97	0.00	22,136.97	-	- Fund Raising	29,355.90	0.03	29,355.87	-
21,163.34	21,163.34	-	-	- Activities / Projects	85,945.54	85,945.54	-	-
13,623.65	13,623.65	-	-	- Administration	43,114.18	43,114.18	-	-
0.00	-	-	-	- District Officials Expenses	0.00	-	-	-
51,686.00	50,348.32	1,337.68	-	- Sundry Expenditure	0.00	0.00	-	-
5,468.39	5,468.39	-	-	- Equipment	12,476.76	12,476.76	-	-
<b>202,170.35</b>	<b>141,513.97</b>	<b>52,565.99</b>	<b>8,090.39</b>	<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>258,017.00</b>	<b>220,041.55</b>	<b>37,975.46</b>	<b>0.00</b>
<b>-1,244.23</b>	<b>1,915.49</b>	<b>1,705.42</b>	<b>-4,865.14</b>	<b>Income less Expenditure</b>	<b>-32,730.52</b>	<b>-47,280.07</b>	<b>10,949.05</b>	<b>3,600.50</b>

31 <sup>st</sup> December 2021				ACCUMULATED FUNDS	31 <sup>st</sup> December 2022			
Total £	Unrestricted £	Designated £	Restricted £		Total £	Unrestricted £	Designated £	Restricted £
234,909.46	150,966.65	59,189.06	24,753.75	Reserves brought forward	233,665.23	152,882.14	60,894.48	19,888.61
-	-	-	-	Prior Year re-allocation	-	-	-	-
<b>-1,244.23</b>	<b>1,915.49</b>	<b>1,705.42</b>	<b>-4,865.14</b>	<b>Income less Expenditure</b>	<b>-32,730.52</b>	<b>-47,280.07</b>	<b>10,949.05</b>	<b>3,600.50</b>
<b>233,665.23</b>	<b>152,882.14</b>	<b>60,894.48</b>	<b>19,888.61</b>	<b>Reserves carried forward</b>	<b>200,934.71</b>	<b>105,602.08</b>	<b>71,843.53</b>	<b>23,489.11</b>

REPRESENTED BY								
Total £	Unrestricted £	Designated £	Restricted £		Total £	Unrestricted £	Designated £	Restricted £
200,849.84	130,961.23	50,000.00	19,888.61	Scout Short Term Investment Account	186,056.13	90,723.49	71,843.53	23,489.11
37,980.93	27,086.45	10,894.48	0.00	Bank Balance at close per bank	20,026.63	20,026.63	0.00	0.00
82.61	82.61	-	-	- Receipts not on bank statement	0.00	0.00	-	-
				Prepaid Income	-2,140.82	-2,140.82	-	-
<b>-5,248.15</b>	<b>-5,248.15</b>	-	-	- Payments not on bank statement	<b>-3,007.22</b>	<b>-3,007.22</b>	-	-
<b>32,815.39</b>	<b>21,920.91</b>	<b>10,894.48</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>Cash Book Balance</b>	<b>14,878.59</b>	<b>14,878.59</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>0.00</b>
<b>233,665.23</b>	<b>152,882.14</b>	<b>60,894.48</b>	<b>19,888.61</b>	<b>Total Represented By</b>	<b>200,934.71</b>	<b>105,602.08</b>	<b>71,843.53</b>	<b>23,489.11</b>

Cath Mudford  
Mersey Weaver District Scout Treasurer

Eric Bennett  
Independent Examiner

*C E M*

*E Bennett*

*23.2.23.*



# **Independent Examiner's Report to the Trustees of the Mersey Weaver District Scout Council**

## **Accounting Period**

I report on the accounts of Mersey Weaver District Scout Council for the period 01 January - 31 December 2021.

## **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 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.

*E Bennett*

23.2.23