

Trustees Annual Report

01 Jan 2023 – 31 Dec 2023

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
Cath Mudford	District Treasurer
Oliver Chambers	District Commissioner
Jake Vickery/Grace Wheeler	District Youth Commissioner
Mike Walker (ACM Clogwyn)	Kevin Holland (ACM DSC)
Matt Morris (ACM QCW)	Emily Morris
Ronald Sayle	Andy Wheeler
Colin Chambers	Ben Nugent
Michelle Pickstock	

2 Objectives & Activities

2.1 Governing Document & Purposes of the Charity

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.

The purpose of the Scouts is to actively engage and support young people in their personal development, empowering them to make a positive contribution to society. By being in the Scouts, adults and young people develop skills for life through participation in a programme, underpinned by our method, and delivered principally in Squirrel Dreys, Beaver Colonies, Cub Packs, Scout Troops, Explorer Units and Scout Networks. The function of all the other adults within our movement is to support the delivery and quality of those programmes in each of our section.

2.2 Main Activities

2.3 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:

Ex-officio Members

The ex officio members of the District Scout Council are members by virtue of their role in The Scouts:

- all adult members with a role in the District - see District Roles in the Chapter 16 Roles Table of The Scout Association's Policy, Organisation and Rules.
- all Group Scout Leaders and Deputy Group Scout Leaders from the District.
- all Group Trustee Board Chairs from the District.
- all Group Trustee Board Treasurers from the District.
- all Section Leaders, Assistant Section Leaders from the District.
- all Group Active Support Managers from the District.
- all Explorers (including Young Leaders) in the District.
- all members of the Scout Network in the District.
- all parents and carers of all Explorers (including Young Leaders).
- a representative of the District Troop Leadership Forum, selected from amongst the membership of the Forum.
- the County Commissioner.
- the County Chair

Appointed Members

- Other appointed members of the District Scout Council who are other supporters of the District appointed by the District Scout Council on the recommendation of the District Commissioner and the District Trustee Board. The number of appointed members must not exceed the actual number of ex officio members. A District Scout Council does not need to have any appointed members.

Community Members

- Community members of the District Scout Council who are representatives of the local community appointed because of their role rather than by name. For example, local headteachers, or Parish Council members. They are appointed by the District Scout Council on the recommendation of the District Commissioner and the District Trustee Board. The number of community members must not exceed the number of ex officio District Scout Council members.

The total number of appointed and community members of a District Scout Council must not exceed the number of ex officio members.

2.4 Constitution and Governing document

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. The constitution is detailed in section 5.5 of POR.

2.5 Trustee Selection

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

The District Trustee Board should comprise a maximum of 12 Trustees (the total of all ex officio, appointed, and co-opted Trustee categories), with a minimum of five Trustees. In Mersey Weaver it is proposed to have up to ten appointed Trustees who are approved by the District Scout Council at the AGM. The Trustee Board can if required co-opt a further two Trustees for a year. The aim is for the District Trustee Board, and any sub committees, to have at least two Trustees aged between their 18th and 25th birthdays.

The selection processes leading to appointment of District Trustees must include a rigorous and transparent selection process, which includes advertising vacancies widely.

All Trustees must complete learning as specified in the appropriate sections of Chapter 16 Roles Table of The Scout Association Policy, Organisation and Rules.

The members of the District Trustee Board are:

- a. The District Commissioner and the District Youth Commissioner are ex officio members of a District Trustee Board.
- b. The District Trustee Board must initiate a selection process to propose a District Chair to the District Scout Council for appointment at their AGM. The vacancies for the role of Chair only occur at the end of their period of appointment (for example, a District Chair may have been appointed for three years and so does not need to be reappointed after years 1 and 2). The proposal from the Trustee Board is received by the Scout Council at their AGM. The proposal from the Trustee Board does not require seconding by a member of the Scout Council. The action of the Scout Council is to approve (or not) the proposed name from the Trustee Board.
- c. The District Trustee Board must initiate a selection process to propose a District Treasurer to the District Scout Council for appointment at their AGM. The vacancies for the role of Treasurer only occur at the end of their period of appointment (for example, a District Treasurer may have been appointed for three years and so does not need to be re-appointed after years 1 and 2). The proposal from the Trustee Board is received by the Scout Council at their AGM. The proposal from

the Trustee Board does not require seconding by a member of the Scout Council. The action of the Scout Council is to approve (or not) the proposed name from the Trustee Board.

- d. The appointed members of a District Trustee Board are persons appointed by the District Scout Council at the District's AGM. This should follow a selection process initiated and overseen by the District Trustee Board. The vacancies for the role of Trustee only occur at the end of their period of appointment (for example, a District Trustee may have been appointed for three years and so does not need to be re-appointed after years 1 and 2). The proposal from the Trustee Board is received by the Scout Council at their AGM. The proposal from the Trustee Board does not require seconding by a member of the Scout Council. The action of the Scout Council is to approve (or not) the proposed name from the Trustee Board.
- e. The co-opted members of a District Trustee Board are persons co-opted annually by the District Trustee Board. They are not appointed by the District Scout Council at its AGM. The number of co-opted members must not exceed the actual number of appointed Trustees (excluding Chair and Treasurer).
- f. The County Chair and the County Commissioner each have the right of attendance at meetings of each of the District Trustee Boards in the Districts in the County.

2.6 District Trustee Board

Historically the District has been led by a District Commissioner supported by a District Executive Committee. They are accountable to the District Scout Council for the satisfactory running of the District. During 2023, the Scouts Association have initiated a major transformation aimed at improving the volunteer experience, to deliver an even more exciting and engaging programme, safely and reliably, for young people and enhance the delivery of skills for life.

As part of this transformation the Commissioner roles have become Lead Volunteers and there has been a move to focus the roles of the Trustees away from operational matters and towards Governance. As part of this change the Executive Committee has evolved through 2023 into the Trustee Board, which is more in line with the Charity Commission best practice.

The Trustee Board remains to support the District Lead Volunteer in meeting the responsibilities of their appointment and to especially to provide guidance, support, and compliance assurance in all aspects of governance inc. safety, legal matters, finance, insurance, data compliance and any other regulatory requirements.

The District Trustee Board is a team of volunteers who work together, as charity Trustees, to make sure the Scouts is run safely and legally. At the heart of their role is a focus on strategy, performance, and assurance. Effective Trustee support helps other volunteers run the Scout programme that gives young people skills for life.

The District Trustee Board is responsible for the governance of the charity, and it is accountable to the District Scout Council. Members of the District Trustee Board must act collectively as charity trustees of Scout District, and in the best interests of the charity's members. Governance roles must be distinct

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to help manage conflicts of interest. This means that the roles of District Chair and District Treasurer must be kept separate and be done by two different people.

The District Trustee Board must act in the charity's best interests, acting with reasonable care and skill and take steps to be confident that:

a) The charity is:

- professionally managed
- carrying out its purposes for the public benefit
- complying with the charity's governing document and the law
- managing the charity's resources responsibly

b) the charity is operating compliant with POR and the local charity regulator, including effective management of each of the Key Policies listed in Chapter 2 of The Scout Association Policy, Organisation and Rules.

c) young people are meaningfully involved in decision making at all levels

d) the District has sufficient resources (funds, people, property and equipment) available to meet the planned work of the District including delivery of the high-quality programme and resource requirements of the training programme (see Rule 4.2.2 of The Scout Association Policy, Organisation and Rules)

The District Trustee Board members must themselves collectively:

a) develop and maintain a risk register, including putting in place appropriate mitigations

b) ensure that the District's finances are effectively managed, including development and maintenance of appropriate budgets to support the work of the District

c) maintain and manage:

- a reserves policy for the charity including a plan for use of reserves outside the 'minimum'.
- an investment policy for the charity.
- a public benefit statement for the charity.

d) ensure that people, property, and equipment are appropriately insured, and that any property and equipment owned or used by the District is properly protected and maintained

e) ensure the appointment and management and operation of any sub committees, including appointing a Chair to lead the sub committees. This should normally be one of the District's Trustees.

f) ensure that effective administration is in place to support the work of the District Trustee Board

g) appoint any co-opted members of the District Trustee Board

h) ensure transparency of operation, including:

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- prepare and approve the Annual Accounts and arrange their examination by an auditor, independent examiner, or scrutineer as appropriate and as appointed by the District Scout Council at their AGM.
- prepare and approve the District Trustees' Annual Report which must include the Annual Accounts and include the report from the auditor, independent examiner, or scrutineer.
- present the approved Trustees' Annual Report and Annual Accounts to the District Scout Council for their consideration at the District's AGM
- following the District AGM, ensure that a copy of the District Trustees' Annual Report and Accounts is sent to the County Trustee Board administration (see Rule 5.5.7.9) and, if the District is a registered charity, is filed with the appropriate charity regulator (if the regulator's rules require it).

i) take responsibility for the District's adherence to Data Protection Legislation recognising that, dependent on circumstances, it will at various times act as a Data Controller and as a Data Processor individually and collectively maintain confidentiality regarding appropriate District Trustee Board business

j) individually and collectively maintain confidentiality regarding appropriate District Trustee Board business

k) put in place annually an open and transparent selection process to recommend to the District Scout Council appropriate persons to be appointed members of the District Trustee Board, including Chair and Treasurer. Vacancies for appointed Trustees only occur at the end of their period of appointment (for example, a Trustee may have been appointed for three years and so does not need to be re-appointed or re-selected after years 1 and 2).

l) where staff are employed:

- act as a responsible employer in accordance with the Scouts' values and relevant legislation.
- ensure that effective line management is in place for each employed staff member and that these are clearly established and communicated.
- ensure that appropriate specific personnel insurance is in place.

A District Trustee Board may create sub committees it deems necessary to support its governance function. The District Trustee Board must ensure that for any subcommittee it appoints:

- a. its purpose is governance focused and not operational.
- b. its members are agreed and approved by the District Trustee Board.
- c. the District Trustee Board Chair is an ex officio member.
- d. the District Commissioner is an ex officio member.

Subcommittee members are not District Trustees unless they are already members of the District Trustee Board.

All subcommittee members must be recorded on the membership system.

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To support effective governance and share good practice, the District Chair and Treasurer should create a support network amongst the Group Chairs and Group Treasurers of the District.

2.7 Risk and Internal Control

The District Trustee Board has developed a dynamic Risk Management Process to help identify the major risks to which they believe the District is exposed. In support of this process the Trustee Board has also developed a Risk Register in which to:

- record these identified risks,
- record necessary mitigating actions in place or needed to reduce these risks to an acceptable level,
- assist in the sharing of these risks across the District teams to help understanding, and clarify the wider team's role in managing these risks,
- track to the appropriate progress of mitigating actions,
- support the ongoing maintenance of this dynamic register.

A copy of this Risk Register is available separately.

3 Objects and Activities

The primary purpose of the District is aligned to that of the Scout Association namely:

'to actively engage and support young people in their personal development, empowering them to make a positive contribution to society.'

The Values of Scouting

As Scouts we are guided by these values:

- Integrity - We act with integrity; we are honest, trustworthy, and loyal.
- Respect - We have self-respect and respect for others.
- Care - We support others and take care of the world in which we live.
- Belief - We explore our faiths, beliefs, and attitudes.
- Co-operation - We make a positive difference; we co- operate with others and make friends.

The Scout Method

Scouting takes place when young people, in partnership with adults, work together based on the values of Scouting and:

- enjoy what they are doing and have fun
- take part in activities indoors and outdoors - learn by doing
- share in spiritual reflection
- take responsibility and make choices
- undertake new and challenging activities - make and live by their Promise.

The activities of the District

- The provision of the Scouting programme for 14–18 year old members (Explorers)
- The provision of scouting for 18–24 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

2023 has seen another strong year for scouting in Mersey Weaver with face-to-face scouting now substantially back to normal. It has again been of major credit to the leaders and other volunteers across the District who have safely and successfully delivered the varied and exciting programmes across MW, which was once again celebrated with an awards event at QCW.

A highlight for 2023 was securing £120K of funding from HQ to extend the full time Group Development Officer for a further two years. Whilst it was a little disappointing to see Andrew Coe, our initial GDO, move on into new role in TSA, it was exciting to see the successful appointment of Emma Jenks as our new GDO.

The Census in 2023 saw further growth in YP by 2.7%, this included a 7.5% increase in adults in programme delivery roles and a 49% increase in Young Leaders! Growth was seen in all sections except for cubs; with a major growth in Squirrels with 7 Dreys, the highest in any District in Cheshire; 2023 also saw the first new Group to be opened in MW. MW is now back to 91% of its pre pandemic levels.

The Explorer units have continued to deliver an exciting adventurous programme with activities including climbing; micro lighting; land yachts; sailing; pioneering; hill walking; and many more. This year also saw the first combined unit summer camp at Clogwyn and the start of Higher Awards programme including DofE.

Further timely progress has been made with the Youth Forum under the joint leader of the District Youth Lead Volunteers with a 50% increase in members. This has included attendance at Local, Cheshire and National Youth Forums and the development of an SEN webinar which is hoped to be rolled out in 2024.

International scouting was a highlight of 2023 with the MW contingent attending the WSJ 2023 in Korea and a small team participating in the 2023 County Explorer Belt. Whilst there were challenges with WSJ 2023 the YP had a tremendous experience and demonstrated great flexibility and resilience.

2023 has been another successful year for the Activity Centres:

Clogwyn has seen continued work to develop the facility and sustain the necessary maintenance. Clogwyn was also the base for the successful summer camp for the combined Explorer units. Thanks to the local support team, and with further support from the Community Payback team.

QCW saw the completion of the new campfire circle as well as the new Target Sports range. Both helped support an excellent year of bookings.

The DSC benefited from substantial progress with its refurbishment with help from the Community Payback team. These improvements include the fully refurbished small meeting hall, which now provides an excellent meeting facility, entrance hall improvements and repainting of the main hall. Further work on the roof and entrance is planned as well as a replacement heating system for the main hall. A development plan for the site is also planned to be started in for 2024.

Sadly, the planned safety audits for Clogwyn and the DSC were not completed in 2023 in part to allow for other remedial work to be completed first, especially at the DSC. These will need to be progressed in 2024.

2023 saw another good year minibus bookings with a substantial summer hire from Manchester Grammar School. The efforts from the minibus support team have enabled a positive contribution, a further contribution to building up a reserve for future replacements.

The District Scout Shop has once again helped provide cost effective scouting equipment to the people across the District as well as making a valued contribution to the District finances.

The Awards Advisory Panel continued to do an excellent job identifying scouters across District to be recognised for their service and contribution; and the AAC panel have continued to be productive in helping appoint new volunteers into key roles in the district.

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.

2023 has seen further investment in the District facilities, as well as in the Local Development Officer. Therefore, whilst the year end funds (£174,966) are higher than the agreed reserve level, they are a significant further reduction since 2022. In addition, of the end of year sum, £49,760 is Designated, which includes funds raised for international camps and £24,717 is Restricted leaving unrestricted funds at £100,488 compared to the agreed minimum reserves level.

It has been agreed that the District will continue to fund the LGO throughout 2024 and into 2025. External support funding has been secured from the Scouts Association and this will reduce the further depletion of reserves. However, it has still be seen as prudent to limit and non-essential development of the Activity Centres in 2024 to reserve funds to support the new targeted Sections and Groups across the District.

The overall finances have continued to be managed in a prudent and professional manner, with expenses settled promptly. Once again, the finance processes led to an accurate and speedy closure for the year end accounts to the full satisfaction our IE.

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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.

Resolution of Gift Aid application remains outstanding.

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. Following the closure of The Scout Association's Short-Term Investment (STI) services, these reserves have now been transferred into a secure account giving a higher rate of return.

An Investment Policy is in place 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: 28/04/2024

Full Name: Oliver Chambers

Position: District Lead Volunteer

Signature:



Date: 28/04/2024

Full Name: Jeff Shaw

Position: District Chair

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

31 st December 2022					31 st December 2023				
Total £	Unrestricted £	Designated £	Restricted £	INCOME	Total £	Unrestricted £	Designated £	Restricted £	
61,188.50	61,188.50	-	-	- Membership subscriptions	64,408.50	64,408.50	-	-	
206.29	206.29	-	-	- Investment Income received	2,514.33	2,514.33	-	-	
37,812.90	24,423.40	9,789.00	3,600.50	- Donations and grants	3,661.38	2,433.38	-	1,228.00	
39,062.75	-72.75	39,135.50	-	- Fund Raising	19,533.62	582.93	18,950.69	-	
37,316.81	37,316.81	-	-	- Activities / Projects	39,167.85	35,992.00	3,175.85	-	
40,784.47	40,784.47	-	-	- Fees and Charges	60,753.22	60,753.22	-	-	
5,659.20	5,659.20	-	-	- Equipment	0.00	0.00	-	-	
3,209.06	3,209.06	-	-	- Administration	2,736.28	2,736.28	-	-	
46.50	46.50	-	-	- Other Income	34.71	34.71	-	-	
<u>225,286.48</u>	<u>172,761.48</u>	<u>48,924.50</u>	<u>3,600.50</u>	Total Income	<u>192,809.89</u>	<u>169,455.35</u>	<u>22,126.54</u>	<u>1,228.00</u>	
EXPENDITURE									
38,408.00	38,408.00	-	-	- Membership Fees	40,806.00	40,806.00	-	-	
46,787.84	40,097.04	6,690.81	-	- Activity Centres	59,856.61	59,856.61	-	-	
1,928.78	0.00	1,928.78	-	- Donations & Grants	50.00	50.00	-	-	
29,355.90	0.03	29,355.87	-	- Fund Raising	36,587.05	30.73	36,556.32	-	
85,945.54	85,945.54	-	-	- Activities / Projects	41,966.64	34,313.67	7,652.97	-	
43,114.18	43,114.18	-	-	- Administration	31,385.74	31,385.74	-	-	
0.00	-	-	-	- District Officials Expenses	0.00	-	-	-	
0.00	0.00	-	-	- Sundry Expenditure	0.00	0.00	-	-	
12,476.76	12,476.76	-	-	- Equipment	8,126.54	8,126.54	-	-	
<u>258,017.00</u>	<u>220,041.55</u>	<u>37,975.46</u>	<u>0.00</u>	Total Expenditure	<u>218,778.58</u>	<u>174,569.29</u>	<u>44,209.29</u>	<u>0.00</u>	
<u>-32,730.52</u>	<u>-47,280.07</u>	<u>10,949.05</u>	<u>3,600.50</u>	Income less Expenditure	<u>-25,968.69</u>	<u>-5,113.94</u>	<u>-22,082.75</u>	<u>1,228.00</u>	

31 st December 2022					31 st December 2023				
Total £	Unrestricted £	Designated £	Restricted £	ACCUMULATED FUNDS	Total £	Unrestricted £	Designated £	Restricted £	
233,665.23	152,882.14	60,894.48	19,888.61	Reserves brought forward	200,934.71	105,602.08	71,843.53	23,489.11	
-	-	-	-	Prior Year re-allocation	-	-	-	-	
-32,730.52	-47,280.07	10,949.05	3,600.50	Income less Expenditure	-25,968.69	-5,113.94	-22,082.75	1,228.00	
<u>200,934.71</u>	<u>105,602.08</u>	<u>71,843.53</u>	<u>23,489.11</u>	Reserves carried forward	<u>174,966.02</u>	<u>100,488.14</u>	<u>49,760.78</u>	<u>24,717.11</u>	
REPRESENTED BY									
186,056.13	90,723.49	71,843.53	23,489.11	Scout Short Term Investment Account	0.00	0.00	-	0.00	
20,026.63	20,026.63	0.00	0.00	Bank Balance at close per bank	187,191.68	112,713.80	49,760.78	24,717.11	
0.00	0.00	-	-	Unallocated Receipt	-2,512.72	-2,512.72	-	-	
-2,140.82	-2,140.82	-	-	- Receipts not on bank statement	244.41	244.41	-	-	
-3,007.22	-3,007.22	-	-	Prepaid Income	-7,983.47	-7,983.47	-	-	
14,878.59	14,878.59	0.00	0.00	- Payments not on bank statement	-1,973.88	-1,973.88	-	-	
				Cash Book Balance	174,966.02	100,488.14	49,760.78	24,717.11	
<u>200,934.71</u>	<u>105,602.08</u>	<u>71,843.53</u>	<u>23,489.11</u>	Total Represented By	<u>174,966.02</u>	<u>100,488.14</u>	<u>49,760.78</u>	<u>24,717.11</u>	

Cath Mudford
Mersey Weaver District Scout Treasurer

30/1/2024

Eric Bennett
Independent Examiner



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

1. Accounting Period

I report on the accounts of Mersey Weaver District Scout Council for the period 01 January – 31 December 2023.

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

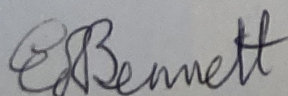
1 which gives me reasonable cause to believe that in, any material respect, the requirements:

- 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.

Eric Bennett



30 January 2024