

Annual Report

2023 - 2024



A message from the chair

Thank you all for your ongoing support of 1st Merton Park Scout Group. For those who don't know me, my name is Emma Maddison and I have been interim Chair of the Trustee Board since November 2023. I have a son in Scouts and a daughter just moving into Cubs, my husband Andrew is the Beaver Section Leader and we have been helping out with 1st Merton Park since 2017.

In the last year we have adopted changes to the composition of the Group as requested by the UK Scouts Association - including changing from an Executive Committee to a Trustee Board.

The responsibilities of this Board remain largely as they were, in that we have the responsibility for ensuring good governance is followed in the management of the Group. I would like to thank our previous Chair, Jan Keen, and vice-chair, Sarah Drinkwater, for their support of 1st Merton Park. I would also like to thank all the members of the Trustee Board and our uniformed volunteers for all their hard work in keeping the Group running day to day.

We have had another great year with all of our Sections, and we remain incredibly popular as a Group. Our limiting factor remains the capacity of our adult volunteers and as such we are looking at various options to recruit additional members of the volunteer team.

We have opportunities to help out with weekly meetings and also with administration behind the scenes, depending on skills and preference of our volunteers. If you think you could spare some time to help share the load please do get in touch and have a conversation with us about what you would find interesting.

It is with great sadness that we will be saying goodbye to our Treasurer, John Garrett, in the next year and we are incredibly grateful for all the hard work he has put into the Group over several years of service. We are therefore specifically looking for a new treasurer this year. A job description will be included with the AGM materials, if you (or anyone you know) is interested, please do get in touch with any questions you may have about the role.

Emma Maddison - Chair of Trustees

Group Scout Leader's Report

What another amazing year we have had here at 1st Merton Park. We have seen growth through all our sections and an ever growing waiting list of people wanting to join us. This year we have celebrated the Squirrels section's 1st birthday. Seeing this section and all of our sections grow is a real testament to our volunteers who I am always amazed with for all the work they do for our young people.

I would like to take this opportunity to welcome all our new leaders to the group and we are looking forward to getting to know them and seeing all the fun adventures they will help bring to the group. I would also like to give a huge thank you to Kate and Mark Renton for all they have done for the group over the last few years. Both Mark and Kate have taken on different roles within scouting now and we wish them all the best. Mark will be staying on with it as an Assistant Section Leader in the Scouts Section.

Throughout the year we have seen many amazing events ranging from camps to sports day. As a group we have also attended a few parades including the district St. Georges Day parade in Wimbledon. It's amazing to see all of our young people getting the chance to do activities that they might not be able to do without scouting and as a group this is something that we want to do more of to help give young people the skills for life. We will be having your annual group camp in July and it's not too late to sign up.

I would also like to thank everyone involved in our Jumble Sales as this is an event that is fundamental to the group's survival as it helps cover costs and keeps our pricing down. So to all that helped out a huge thank you! We will need your help again and more to help keep this event going strong for another 60 years. It's important to know that this would not be possible without Kathy who has been the mastermind behind the sale for many years.

This year I would like to make the group more transparent in what's going on and why we are doing what we do. We are in the final stages of creating a group development plan that will be shared to everyone. Like anything I would happily take feedback and suggestions of what you think we do well or what you think we could do better or different.

Let's make 2024 a year to remember and use 2023 as a year to improve on but what an amazing year 23 was for the group.

Zak Clark - Group Scout Leader

Squirrels

Section Team

Section Leader

Kerry Sheehan

Assistant Section Leaders

Sam Warren

Marilia Gomez

Squirrels Section Report

What an amazing year we have had doing Squirrels within the district. We celebrated our 1st birthday and saw some of our original Squirrels swim up to Beavers. We went on our first day trip to the group camp where we got to do grass sledding. And we are looking forward to seeing what this year brings.

We have also been invited to many District Beaver events that we have been amazed with and have enjoyed.

We have achieved over 4 chief scout acorn awards with the highest expectations that all of our Squirrels will have this before they move to Beavers. We are looking at planning a sleepover this term to help the Squirrels transition to Beavers where they spend the night at group camp.

Beavers

Section Team

Section Leader

Andrew Maddison

Assistant Section Leaders

Jonathan Attley

Alec Cooper

Lara-Jane Sharpe



Beavers Section Report

We've had a good year in Beavers. We've attended 2 camps, the Group camp in July, and in a first for Merton Park, a Beavers only camp in May.

We've attended district events, including Laser tag in February, Sports day in May and the District Beavers camp fire at Frylands Wood in October.

We've run a full programme, and every one of the 15 beavers who swum up to cubs in 2023 and 5 in 2024 have achieved their Chief Scout Bronze awards. Programme highlights include scouting staples such as firelighting, hiking and navigation, as well as some adventurous activities such paddle boarding with Dave Bixby, the District Commissioner, and whittling. The Assistant District Commissioner for Beavers came to witness the whittling, the Beavers behaved perfectly and all left with the same number of fingers they arrived with.

We have some challenges, specifically numbers are down, with 18 Beavers (maximum colony size is 24), 3 adult leaders and 1 youth leader. We need to reinvigorate our waiting list, both for beavers and as one source of volunteers.

Cubs

Section Team

Section Leader

Jane Clark

Assistant Section Leaders

Tony Giordani

Geoff Claydon

Section Assistant

Adrian Kee



Cubs Section Report

This year has been another busy year for the cubs and leaders. I would like to start by thanking two leaders Kate and Mark for all of their hard work and dedication to the pack and to say that they will be missed after deciding to step down.

This year we can celebrate every Cub that has moved up to scouts and have all succeeded in achieving their silver awards.

Our cubs have done a lot of work towards many badges. The cubs have had great fun working towards these and the leaders have planned fantastic programs to achieve the badges.

We have attended church parades during the year, we have done a chip shop hike, Wimbledon Common and Wandle trail (half in the dark) hikes which I think have been highlights for the cubs. We had summer camp again, great fun for all the leaders. We really enjoy seeing the confidence build within the Cubs as individuals and as a team.

We tried to do something different this year to celebrate fathers day. Our cubs invited their fathers or grandads to come to Cubs for a pizza made by them on a most enjoyable evening. We have had some wonderful evenings led by visitors, the reptile man coming in to show the cubs snakes and a bearded dragon there were so many questions. We have had the police and a local politician again with lots of questions from the Cubs. The Cubs have camped for an evening at the RAF museum, an amazing experience for all involved.

We went to camp and once again a great time was had by all, we were at a new site so they really enjoyed exploring and new activities and great new skills learned. Another summer camp has been planned so all looking forward to that.

The summer term ended with our yearly sausage sizzle, a brilliant evening with all the sections.

The summer term is also full of adventure and fun for all of us.

I would like to thank the parents for their continued support, but more importantly the great leadership team that I owe a great deal of thanks to as without them none of this would have been possible.

Scouts

Section Team

Section Leader

Mark Renton

Assistant Section Leaders

Nic Katzanos

Lara-Jane Sharpe

Charles Green

Bob Voller

Scouts Section Report

The Scout section had an exciting year in 2023. We took part in several district activities, from Rafting to 5-a-side, and ran our first camp since lockdown – a successful cycle camp where the scouts ride from Guildford to Worthing over the course of 2 days. From a programme perspective, we managed to get out to Wimbledon Common for some Geocaching, started our electronics badge learning about electronic circuits, spent a night paddleboarding and brushed up on our First Aid and Navigation. We enjoyed a summer 'sausage sizzle' with the cubs and beavers and ended the year with a fun night bowling at Tolworth.

A full year of District & County events were run in 2023, and we took advantage of as many as we could, taking part in the County Night Exercise and Incident Hike competitions, district 5-a-side and Sports Day events and had some fun rafting on the Wandle.

The diverse programme we have run over the past year resulted in 49 badges being awarded to our scouts, including badges for Expeditions, Hikes and Communication.

We have seen our membership numbers remain stable at about 18 regular attendees out of 20 registered members.

Maintaining the Leadership team remains a key activity, and we're really pleased to have had the support of our GSL to recruit and support the scout team. We had 4 regular leaders throughout the year, which allowed us to run the diverse programme and support so many county events. I would like to thank them for their fantastic support and enthusiasm throughout the year.

This has all been made possible through the fantastic support we receive from our trustees, part funding all of the events we run, and of course the parents who are an important part of the group, allowing their children to attend and supporting our various activities.

Merton Park Explorer Unit

EXPLORERS
Merton Park

Explorer Unit Report

The end of 2022 and the start of 2023 saw some big changes in the Unit. We had been steadily growing over the last couple of years and had outgrown the Scout Hut in St Mary's Church Hall Car Park. We had been hoping to move into the Church Hall but all the evenings were taken, and this led us to look locally for another venue. We were lucky to find that Merton Park Primary School's main Hall was available, and they were open to allow us to use this space to continue meeting as a Unit locally.

Throughout 2023 the Unit has continued to grow, with new Scouts coming up from the Troop, as well as young people wishing to join us from outside the Scout Group. In the Summer we were sad to see some of our older Explorers leave the unit and move on to Network Scouts to continue their scouting journey. By the end of 2023, we were still able to maintain numbers at our Census count of 17 young people.

In this period there has also been a change to the Leadership Team, with Vicky Tullett stepping down and Alex Whiting becoming the new Explorer Scout Leader. We have also been joined by several new leaders, including Josh Bennett, Sophie Moore, and most recently Vinnie Renton. Lastly, Clive Tullett, who has been a Venture Scout and then Explorer Scout Leader for over 40 Years has now stepped down as a warranted leader and retired from the Unit.

Throughout the year we have completed some exciting activities, in the evenings they have included 'Stop Motion Pictures', Chip Shop Surveys, Survival Skills, Para cording, as well as the usual Scouting 'Stuff'. In addition to these, the Unit also took part in activities which included District 'Let's Cook', Paintballing, Ice-Skating, Gang Show participants, and going to see it performed.

A big part of the Unit focus is on completing adventurous activities. We have been able to include different camps throughout the year, from the Group Camp with the Beavers, Cubs, and Scouts, to the joint District camp in Kent with Royal Kingston District. I think most would agree the big one for last year was when the Unit had 5 Explorers taking part in the World Scout Jamboree in Korea (a Scout Leader also went as a Unit leader). They all had a wonderful time, creating memories that will stay with them for a lifetime.

We are continuing to grow and have many adventures planned for 2024, these would not happen if not for the adult help the Unit gets. This is from the Leadership Team and all the adult helpers who give up their time to support us in many different ways. If you fancy getting involved please get in touch, all are welcome.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone involved in supporting our Explorer Scouts, enabling them to gain #Skills For Life

Alex Whiting

Explorer Scout Leader - Merton Park Unit

Trustee Board

Group President

Clive Tullet

Group Chair

Emma Maddison

Group Treasurer

John Garrett

Group Secretary

Jessica Dahlstrom

Trustee Board Members

Kathy Di Franco

Hannah McDonald

Ex-officio Members

Zak Clark

Ben Clark

Jane Clark

Kerry Sheehan

Mark Renton

Treasurer's Report

1st Merton Park Scout group

Receipts and Payments Account for the year ended 31 December 2023

2022		2023	
£	p	£	p
22,196.21	Opening Balances	17,655.43	
	Receipts		
7,812.48	Jumble Sales	7,386.22	
6,870.45	Subscriptions	13,698.55	
10,427.34	Camps	6,005.34	
1,023.86	Other	274.32	
26,134.34	All receipts	27,364.43	
48,330.34	Total of receipts and opening balances	45,019.86	
	Less Payments		
2,509.83	Rent and Hall hire	3,536.24	
1,597.88	Hut expenses	1,550.00	
564.51	Insurance	713.93	
867.92	Equipment	1,769.82	
631.23	Uniforms, Training and Books	800.00	
897.26	Admin, Stationery, Printing	200.00	
15,131.92	Camps and Activities	9,977.15	
2,698.00	HQ Membership (Note 3)	3,315.00	
866.36	Donations	52.50	
1,682.00	Jumble	1,208.45	
3,228.00	Explorer subs	2,808.50	
30,674.91	All payments	25,931.59	
17,655.43	Closing Balance	19,088.27	

2022		2023	
£	p	£	p
22,139.18	Opening Balances	11,374.53	
	National Westminster Bank Limited		

0.00	Lloyds Bank	6,223.87
57.03	Cash	57.03
22,196.21		17,655.43

2022	Closing balances	2023
£ p		£ p
11,374.53	National Westminster Bank Limited	3,761.50
6,223.87	Lloyds Bank	15,269.74
57.03	Cash	57.03
17,655.43		19,088.27

Liabilities

None

2023	
Opening balance	£17,655.43
Surplus (deficit)	£1,432.84
Closing balance	£19,088.27

2022	
Opening balance	£22,196.21
Surplus (deficit)	(-£4,540.78)
Closing balance	£17,655.43

2021	
Opening balance	£21,965.73
Surplus (deficit)	£230.48
Closing balance	£22,196.21

We received two giftaid payments this year because the one that was supposed to arrive in 2022 came in January 2023. It was for £1,500, so really we broke even in 2023.

2023 AGM Minutes

MINUTES OF 1st MERTON PARK ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING HELD IN PERSON AND ON ZOOM ON TUESDAY 4 May 2023

1. Welcome

The Chair of the meeting, Ray Donovan-Hill, welcomed those present including those who had joined the meeting online.

Present in person were:

Ben Clark
Jane Clark
Zak Clark
Jessica Dahlstrom
Kathy Di Franco
Ray Donovan-Hill
John Garrett
Jan Keen
Tim Kerridge
Hannah MacDonald
Emma Maddison
Jonny Reeks
Kate Renton
Mark Renton
Vinnie Renton

Jessica Dahlstrom, Secretary, took the minutes of the meeting.

The Chair welcomed those attending the Annual General Meeting (AGM) and explained changes to be made during 2023 to the governance of Scout groups. An outline was provided of the functions of the AGM.

2. Apologies

No apologies were received.

3. Minutes of the AGM held on 27 April 2022

The minutes of last year's AGM were approved.

4. Matters arising

Further to minute 11 of the 27 April 2022 meeting, a Squirrels section had now been opened and a report from this section was included in the papers for this meeting.

5. Consideration of the Report of the Group Executive

The AGM considered the reports from the different sections and thanked the leaders of the sections for their hard work during the pandemic and recovery. A verbal update on the Explorers section was provided.

6. Consideration of the accounts for the year ended 31 December 2022

This was the first full year after the Covid-19 period. There had been a decrease in the financial balance of around £3,000, which was due to sections being able to recommence activities post Covid-19, with associated expenditure. The Group's bank account had been switched to Lloyds. An overview of jumble sale proceeds was provided.

7. Appointment of Group President

Clive Tullett was appointed as 1st Merton Park Scout Group President. This was an honorary post which would involve ceremonial duties.

Clive was nominated by Zak Clark and seconded by Jane Clark.

8. Appointment / Election of Group Chair

A brief overview of the role of the Trustee Board as per the new Scout governance arrangements was provided by the outgoing Chair. It was noted that the Trustee Board was a team of volunteers who worked together, as charity Trustees, to make sure the Scouts was run safely and legally. At the heart of their role was a focus on strategy, performance and assurance. The Trustee Board would also provide any necessary support to the Group Scout Leader, when required, to assist the opening, change, merging or closing of sections in the Group.

Attendees noted that the full details for the Chair role could be found in Chapter 5 of the Scouts Policy, Organisation and Rules document.

The Group Scout Leader thanked Ray Donovan-Hill for his 16 years of service.

The Group Scout Leader nominated Jan Keen for the role of Group Chair and Jan was appointed. The Group Scout Leader nominated Sarah Drinkwater for the role of Group Vice-Chair and Sarah was appointed.

The new Group Chair and Group Vice-Chair provided an overview of their professional background.

9. Election of Group Treasurer and Group Secretary

Treasurer: John Garrett was nominated by Zak Clark, seconded by Emma Maddison and elected as the Treasurer.

Secretary: Jessica Dahlstrom was nominated by Zak Clark, seconded by Mark Renton and elected as the Secretary.

10. Appointment / Election of Members to Group Executive

The composition of the Trustee Board was outlined. It was made up of the Group Chair and Vice-Chair, the Group Secretary, the Group Treasurer, the Group Scout Leader, persons with a Section Leader role and the Explorer Leader. In terms of Section Leaders, it was noted that Andrew Maddison would not be on the Trustee Board, and Vicky Tullett would represent the Explorers.

Parent members of the Trustee Board were Emma Maddison, Hannah MacDonald and Hannah O'Donogue. It was agreed that additional parents could be co-opted as members of the Trustee Board during the year.

Ben Clark and Kate Renton were nominated as members of the Trustee Board by Zak Clark, and seconded by Jane Clark.

Kathy Di Franco was co-opted as a member of the Trustee Board, nominated by Zak Clark and seconded by Vicky Tullett.

10. Election of Independent Examiner

Marco Di Franco was nominated by John Garrett, seconded by Mark Renton and elected as Independent Examiner.

11. Any Other Business

Members of the Trustee Board noted that information on the composition and operation of the Trustee Board had been circulated, as part of the Scouts Policy, Organisation and Rules document.

The meeting closed at 8.34pm.

And finally, Thank You!

Thank you all for all that you do for 1st Merton Park Scouts! It means the world to all of us what you do week on week and continue your amazing commitment to our young people.