

1ST POTTON SCOUT GROUP

England & Wales · Charity number 274416

Details

Status Registered

Legal form Other

Registered 1977-11-03

Register [View on the Charity Commission register](#)

Contact

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Hatley Road
Potton
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Website www.pottonscouts.org.uk

Activities

Objects: THE INSTRUCTION OF BOYS OF ALL CLASSES IN THE PRINCIPLES OF DISCIPLINE, LOYALTY AND GOOD CITIZENSHIP.

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

Classification

- **How:** Other Charitable Activities
- **What:** General Charitable Purposes, Education/training, Economic/community Development/employment
- **Who:** Children/young People

Geography

- Central Bedfordshire

Finances

Period end	Income	Expenditure	Assets	Employees
2025-03-31	£37,185	£39,629	-	-
2024-03-31	£33,736	£31,939	-	-
2023-03-31	£24,050	£31,916	-	-
2022-03-31	£23,208	£23,306	-	-
2021-03-31	£28,867	£14,551	-	-

Trustees

Name	Role	Appointed
Andrew Duggan		2025-07-04
Andrew John Bargery		2021-11-09
Carl Sturges		2025-07-04
Felicity Wing		2025-07-04
Grahame Hill		2025-07-04
Jane Delaney		2025-07-04
Janette May		2025-07-04
Jessica Cobb		2025-07-04
Julia Sheena Smith		2023-03-09
Lews French		2025-07-04
Peter White		2025-07-04

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Group Lead Volunteer's Report

I remain pleased with the progress we are making across the Group. There have been some challenges, but overall, it is great to see young people across all sections enjoying safe and fun Scouting.

Here are some of my highlights from the last 12 months.

Volunteer Team

We have added volunteers across all sections and at our Trustee Board in the past 12 months and there is now a good blend of experienced and new volunteers, working with and supporting each other. A warm welcome to:

Louisa Turner, Chris Goodier, Richard Wish and Felicity Wing

We have also had some resignations from their primary role in the Group and I would like to thank these volunteers for their work and commitment: Neil Cobb, Tamzin Snow.

The Scout Association has introduced its new volunteer system as part of its digital transformation in this last year. I would like to thank the volunteers for embracing this change which has unfortunately not been a distraction and added little to the experience of volunteering with Scouts.

Awards

It was a real highlight to see Roy Snell awarded the Silver Wolf at the District camp in June. This is the highest award a volunteer can achieve in Scouting and is very much deserved. Roy has been instrumental in Scouting across Biggleswade and District and further afield for more than 40 years, and most recently for Potton Scout Group he has led the way in re-establishing our Drake Scout Troop. Roy deserves our congratulations and admiration. Well done, Roy.

It was good to see Becky Perry and Louise Esposito receive their Wood Badges and other notable awards include Emma Westmoreland (15 years) and Alasdair Perrin (5 years).

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I have also had the pleasure of presenting a Badger Award this year to Lewis Glennister to recognise his support of the Group.

One final award traditionally presented at the AGM is for 'Services to the Hut.' There is a clear winner with this year for continued contribution to keeping the grounds looking great and being a real asset the Group.

Safety & Safeguarding

There has been continued focus from the Scout Association on safety and safeguarding and as a Group we are carrying this through into our programmes and activities. We are also doing well in ensuring our volunteers are up to date with the mandatory training requirements.

Sections

All the sections have been busy this year, running a full and varied programme for our young people. There are reports from the Section Leaders to follow, but I wish to reiterate my sincere thanks to all our Group volunteers for their dedication to providing an excellent Scouting experience in Potton.

Whether they have worn a uniform and run a weekly section, served tea and cakes at the St George's Day Parade, or walked with us as we proudly support the Remembrance parade, or helped to keep our facilities clean and tidy, we simply couldn't do it without the whole team pulling together.

We must also remember the vital work done by the Trustee Board. While they may be less visible and smaller in number, their work is important to the success of the Group.

Waiting List

Our waiting list keeps growing and we have more than 80 young people waiting to join the Group. This speaks volumes for the quality of the Scouting provided.

New Equipment

The Group has made a big investment this year in acquiring equipment for kayaking and canoeing. This adds another exciting adventurous activity we can offer to our

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young people across most sections and my thanks go to Peter White, Lewis French and Michael Smith from Raleigh Troop for leading on this initiative. It was very rewarding to see the first sessions with the Raleigh Troop members in June.

Andy Bargery
Group Lead Volunteer

Hazelnut Squirrels Dray – Section Update

Presented by Charlotte Chalkley aka Mouse
Team Leader

Woodland Beaver Colony – Section Update

This year has been a busy, adventurous, and rewarding one for the Woodland Beavers. We currently have 16 invested Beavers in the colony and continue to provide a fun, varied, and engaging program for the children of Potton and surrounding areas.

Over the past year, we've enjoyed a fantastic variety of activities including:

- A **Wild West Adventure Day**
- Taking part in the **Remembrance Parade**
- A joint **Movie Night with Riverbank Beavers**
- Exploring the local area in Potton and Sutton, with a **scavenger hunt**, splashing in the **Ford**, and lots of outdoor fun
- A **Teddy Bears Picnic**
- Meeting a **real-life barn owl**
- An exciting **visit to the fire station**
- Plus all the usual Beaver fun of **campfires, knots, games**, and of course — **lots of running around!**

Since September, an incredible **209 badges** have been awarded to our Beavers, including **8 Chief Scout Bronze Awards**, which is a real testament to their enthusiasm and commitment. These awards reflect not just the children's achievements, but also the hard work and dedication of our team of volunteers.

It has also been a challenging year behind the scenes. I originally planned to step down last July, but when our previous Section Lead Volunteer stepped away

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unexpectedly, I agreed to stay on “until Christmas.” One year later, I’m still here! However, this summer marks the end of my time as Section Lead Volunteer.

Recruiting new volunteers has continued to be difficult, but we’ve recently had a couple of new people start helping out, which brings hope for the colony’s future. I sincerely hope that **Woodland Beavers** continues to grow — in both volunteers and young people — and continues to offer the same energy, adventure, and support that it has this year.

Thank You

A massive thank you goes to:

- **Weasel (Louisa)** and **King Louie (Neil)** for their consistent support and presence each week
- **Buck (Leigh)** for stepping in when work allowed
- **Newt (Becky)** from Riverbank Beavers for help with the programme and her ongoing support
- And of course, to all the **parents** — thank you for your patience, flexibility, and willingness to help when extra hands are needed!

It has been a genuine pleasure to see the Beavers grow in confidence, skills, and friendship over the past year. I’m incredibly proud of everything the colony has achieved and feel privileged to have played a part in their scouting journey.

Yours in Scouting,
Jess Cobb aka Ratty
Team Leader

Riverbank Beaver Colony – Section Update

Riverbank Colony has been kept busy this year with a programme incorporating adventure and learning, wrapped up with lots of fun. We have crept up in size and typically have around 20-24 young people in the section at any one time, (compares to 18 last year). During the year we have had relatively few changes in the Colony, welcoming 7 Squirrels and swimming 5 young people up to Cubs. Included in this has been the original founding Squirrels who are now reaching Cub age.

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Our programme has been put together to be varied, making best use of the outdoors space we have access to, light and weather. It incorporates suggestions and requests from the Beavers who have an opportunity each term to help shape what we do. During the year we have awarded 229 challenge, activity and staged badges and had 7 young people achieve their Bronze Chief Scout Award.

We have this year had a much closer relationship between Riverbank and Woodland Colonies, with joint programme planning and a number of young people moving between the two Colonies. We also hosted a joint Beaver and Squirrel movie night at the Hut. This was popular and for many of the Beavers was their first night away with us. It was a great confidence booster in the run up to Group Camp where we were offsite and under canvas – a first for Riverbank in the 3 years I've been involved.

I want to thank those that have given generously with their time, ideas, patience and support in running the Colony, be these other leaders or parent helpers. Whilst we have a great team, Riverbank are desperately short of uniformed leaders, having to rely on leaders from other sections when running events outside of the weekly meeting. We would very much like to recruit a second uniformed leader dedicated to Riverbank Colony.

Becky Perry aka Newt
Team Leader

Leopards Cub Pack – Section Update

So Leopard Cubs have had a busy year, many badges presented since the start of term.

We currently have 20 young people, having recently moved 3 along to Scouts and 3 other older Cubs are also shared to Drake Scouts and will leave us at the end of the term.

We are in a great position with leaders now, with Toni Meyer (Raksha) Alex Hollyman (Chill) Luke Savage (Baloo) Emma Westmorland (Kaa) attending very regularly and sharing their own individual skills. We also have 2 Young Leaders – Lauren and Rory both working through their D of E and helping at Cubs most weeks.

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The Group recently attended the Group / District Camp at Boyd , I was on holiday so left that to both Raksha and Chill ; I hear that it went well and the Cubs enjoyed taking part.

With more adult volunteers we are able to cover and complete more badges and have recently presented several Silver Awards; I have one YP , Roberta Mason, attending the County Awards ceremony this year.

A sum up of what we have done over the year; We've done Several fire drills, wide games, Hikes, visited the circus, a Halloween evening, most of the section attended the Potton Remembrance day parade, we have enjoyed Fire lighting and Backwoods cooking. In December we took the Cubs on the Ivel Sprinter buses to the Milton Keynes Snowdome for a tobogganing evening. This was funded by the Exec. Thankyou – they had a great time.

We also had a Christmas bake off and the Cubs made mince pies – “Mary Berry” AKA Jane Leonard was our judge and a prize apron was presented to Joanna, the competition winner.

This year we have done a litter pick, hiked to Gamlingay, had an archery evening and we are about to complete our Cyclist badge by riding from Sandy to Willington. On Tuesday this week we have taken part in a Tennis try-out session at Potton and next week they are doing raft-building at Shuttleworth college. We plan to take part in the Sixer and Seconder camp in September and have a District day at Grafham in July as well as the trip to the National Space Centre in October. It is great to be able to offer the Cubs opportunities that they might not otherwise have and they are all very enthusiastic to “give it a go”

Well done Cubs and thanks to my Leader team

Jan May aka Akela
Team Leader

Panthers Cub Pack – Section Update

A year gone by and Panthers Cub Pack remains lively and full of accomplishment, with high attendance and membership consistently maintained within the range of 24 to 28. This is a testament to the enthusiasm and commitment of our young members and their families.

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In terms of activities, the year has been packed with engaging meetings and events. Our gatherings saw a variety of themes, including quirky sessions such as "Water water everywhere" and "Bonfire Guys!" Each meeting provided opportunities for growth, learning, and fun while fostering camaraderie among the children. Notable sessions included two "Tent Pitching" meetings, which prepared our Cubs for their outdoor adventures, and a "Panto Practice" series leading up to a much-anticipated performance.

Our events throughout the year were equally remarkable. The "I'm a Panther get me stuck in here" camp was a memorable three-day experience, filled with activities that brought everyone closer together and to nature, or at least the taste of some of it. We also participated in the District Cub Camp, where our Cubs engaged in teamwork and outdoor skills. Other highlights included the exciting "John Lawson Circus," the community-focused "Potton Town Litter Pick," and the annual "St. Georges Day Parade."

Our Cubs also had the pleasure of being involved in competitions and activities that encouraged creativity and skill, such as the "Karting" event and the "District Competitions." Allowing our Cubs to learn new skills and to enjoy each other's company in a fun and active setting.

Throughout the year, we were proud to present eight Chief Scout Awards, recognising the dedication of our members in achieving this prestigious honour. These awards reflect the hard work and commitment displayed by our Cubs over the years and mark a significant accomplishment in their Scouting journey. Looking forward, our Cubs are on track to reach their Silver Award, which prepares them to transition into Scouts, opening up new adventures and opportunities for personal development. This is an exciting time for everyone involved, and we look forward to seeing how our Cubs progress as they take on new challenges. We extend our heartfelt thanks to all our leaders for their continuous hard work and dedication in providing a nurturing environment for our Cubs to thrive and grow. Special mention to Louise for gaining her wood beads at the "Big Group Camp @ The Bigg Weekender".

As we reflect on the past year, we also wish to express our gratitude to the families for their ongoing support and to all the volunteers who help run the group behind the scenes. The joy that our children bring to our gatherings is a reminder of why

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we do what we do. We look forward to another lovely year of Scouting, with more memories to create and challenges to overcome together.

Raleigh Scout Troop - Section Update

Every year is different, and we set off this last year looking to re-establish our culture as an ambitious troop with a disciplined but gentle and welcoming atmosphere. That has been achieved and will stand us in good stead as we grow the troop again.

We have undertaken a number of activities over the year including the usual fire lighting, saw, knife and axe work, navigation and map reading, day and night hikes, full load carrying, cooking on fires, wide games, gutting fish, group camp* (at the Bigg Weekender) and more. [*Thanks to the organising team who did so well.]

For Remembrance Day we hiked to the former SoE airfield barn (WWII 'departure lounge' for spies of the Special Operations Executive) at Gibraltar Farm, had a good number of Scouts for the community parade to the cemetery, and for St George's Day.

In the winter we looked at matters related to the emergency services, and had representatives from the fire, ambulance services and one of our own Police officers. Training in each area led up to our 'disaster night' with a mock incident with fire fighting and first aid scenarios. Huge thanks to Carlton for providing a 'crashed' car, Alex, and Cameron for bringing an emergency ambulance, and Carl P for being our Police officer attending the incident.

Summer term started with a first for us: Scout-led cardboard armour making and a historic battle wide game. We will finish the term with archery, thanks to Alasdair.

The purchase of kayaks from Boyd Campsite is a big win for the future. And the gift of some larger kayaks from Priory Sailing Club in Bedford (where Michael and his family sail). Raleigh have done a couple of trial sessions at Priory Sailing Club as we began to explore how to use them and start the process of putting in place the right safety equipment and practices. Grants have been applied for to get them up to condition and for buoyancy aids. Lewis and Michael have been key to getting these in order and establishing safe procedures and practices.

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One of our lessons so far has been the benefit of having canoes in addition to kayaks. That makes the activity safer (with a canoe as a rescue boat) and more inclusive, and significantly increases the number of Scouts that can be on the water within permit holder ratios. It assists in the 1-2-1 requirement for non-swimmers, with Scouts less confident or capable on the water, and will help get larger leaders on the water. Carl Sturges, our Quartermaster has very generously bought a large canoe for the group. Raleigh Troop has donated all its running money and together with Peter & Jill White has bought another one. These will be a huge resource to the group, and we look forward to seeing more canoe and kayak permit holders trained (leaders, parents & trustees).

Summer Camp this year will be a joint one with Drake Troop to Dorset, including Brownsea Island – to the site of the first ever Scout Camp by Baden Powell. We plan to run the camp the lines he did and have 20 Scouts and 6-9 leaders attending. Roy has already bought the bugle horn! Huge thanks to those who help and support to make these camps possible (and at the accessible cost we provide them). That goes to the Raleigh and Drake leaders attending, but also to the Reeds for loan of a van, Newnham Middle School for a minibus, Ivel Valley School for MiDAS training for minibus drivers, Carlton & Grahame for driving everything down and bringing it back as we take the Scouts into the island for the last 3 days, and Carl for catering for us all.

We have 5 Scouts capable of completing their Gold Chief Scouts award this year, and up to 7 who may go on to Explorers. We will keep a couple of Scouts on the books until October to allow those Scouts to gain their Expedition Challenge Award (and Gold CSA). As the last large year group leaves, the pre-Drake Troop year group imbalances will end, and we will have smaller numbers in September, building up gradually with a healthy range of numbers in each age group. Smaller numbers this year have enabled us to take some older young people directly from the waiting list.

Peter White
Team Leader

Drake Scout Troop - Section Update

Well 17 months on from the reopening of Drake Scout Troop. We ended the year with a hot pot evening, a train ride with a hike. And Remembrance Day parade.

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Closing the year with the Ice skating. We started off the year with the fire safety, Skills badges. We put on a Scout Skills Survival weekend with 16 scouts attending and surviving a minus 4 ½ degrees in Northill.

Around 150 badges have been gained, we are proud to announce that two scouts are about to gain their gold award. And we have a leader that had been awarded the Silver Wolf Roy.

WE have grown Steadily with now 21 scouts and three more to join soon. Welcome to Drake leadership team is Chris Goodier joined us at the end of May and now Richard that has joined us in June. This now gives Drake a very strong Leadership team of 4 Drake leaders and 3 valuable cub leaders supporting the troop each week.

June, we attended the Big Weekend at Boyd field campsite in Henlow. Great time had by all. Thanks to the Potton team.

We have taken part in a few sponsored fund-raising events. At the end of July 6 Drake scouts will be joining Raleigh Troop on a joint scout summer camp to Dorset and spending two nights on Brownsea Island.

I would like to thank all the Drake team for their support and dedication over the past year.

Roy Snell
Team Leader

Treasurer's Report

I would firstly like to thank everyone for keeping in touch with me regarding activities and payments to be expected and new members. These emails really do help 😊.

For the tax year ending 31 March 2025, unfortunately the Scout Group has made a loss of £2443.95, as you will see from the spreadsheet screenshot below.

Although it is great that the higher rate of subs has really increased our income, the Capitation invoice was larger and the grants we received were £4000 lower than the previous tax year.

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We have spent nearly £4000 more on activities than the activity payments we received in. Unfortunately, I have not had time to analyse the spreadsheet in order to ascertain the reason for the difference. While it's wonderful that our young members have access to such a wide range of experiences, this imbalance isn't sustainable in the long term, therefore going forward it would be good if the incoming payments and outgoing expenses could be closer aligned.

Now for more positive news! We have gained a lot of bank interest, due to changing bank accounts. Unfortunately, rates have dropped lately but at least we are still getting something!

We have received quite a few more Gift Aid declarations on OSM. Which is really good, and every penny helps! So, if all Leaders could continue to encourage parents/guardians to complete the Gift Aid declaration, it would be appreciated. I will shortly be submitting the Gift Aid claim for the 24/25 tax year.

The money received from Fund-Raising was from Party on Potton and the Burns Night event. For this new tax year, we have had a parent who is helping with fundraising so it will be great to have extra income here.

This concludes the Treasurer's Report 😊.

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Accounts for tax year ending 31st March 2025					
	2024/25	2023/24		2024/25	2023/24
Income			Expenditure		
Subscriptions	15,555.00	12,111.00	Capitation	8,003.00	6,896.00
Gift Aid	1,659.51	1,200.86	Termly Floats (prev. Section Expenses)	3,598.00	2,512.00
Donations	15.00	230.00	Premises - Services	5,176.86	5,946.82
Grants	2,850.00	6,800.00	Premises - Other	1,715.13	1,268.51
Activities	10,863.49	6,882.41	Activities	14,641.39	8,644.95
Fund Raising	2,202.02	2,460.99	New equipment	5,243.42	3,241.30
Hut Hire	2,952.00	3,907.00	Scout Hut Improvements	11.98	1,759.14
Bank Interest	929.18	0.00	Administration and Training	723.07	658.97
Miscellaneous/Uniform/Badges	158.50	144.00	Miscellaneous/Uniform/Badges	515.80	1,011.70
Excess of Expenditure over Income	2,443.95	N/A	Excess of Income over Expenditure	N/A	1,796.87
	39,628.65	33,736.26		39,628.65	33,736.26
Bank Reconciliation	31/03/2025	31/03/2024			
Current Account	4,156.33	29,349.77			
Instant Access Savings Account	10,157.93	25,695.87			
95-Day Notice Savings Account	40,541.01	N/A			
Surplus/(Loss) for year	(0.00)	1,796.87			
	54,855.27	56,842.51			

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Julia Smith
Treasurer

Fundraising Secretary Report

We do not currently have a Fundraising Secretary. However, our dedicated team of volunteers has been very active raising funds for the Group. Events included our regular Burns Night, which returned to pre-Covid levels of success, selling burgers at Party on Potton, and supporting the Potton Playhouse in hosting a very successful evening at the HQ. Plans for a quiz night have also been suggested.

I hope we can appoint a new Fundraising Secretary to support us during the next year and continue to contribute to our Group's development and keeping costs for our members affordable and accessible for all.

Andy Bargery
Group Scout Leader

Quartermaster's Report

Well what a year it's been, with lots of kit being used across all sections. After our buying spree last year, bell tents etc. we've not had a huge amount to buy, until very recently.

The group have always been very keen to get our young people on the water, to date we've always relied on Luton Sea Scouts and their brilliant water activity days or using equipment borrowed and hired from third parties.

Thanks to the sterling efforts of Peter, Lewis and Michael we now have our own kayaks, paddles and various safety kit. There's been hours of work gone into making this possible, deals made and favours cashed in. It should be noted that we had a very kind donation of 8 kayaks from Bedford sailing club, thanks in the main to Michael who happened to be in the right place at the right time.

Only this week we purchased a couple of canoes for use as safety boats, Peter went and collected one from Solihull the other evening, so thank you for that.

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Other purchases were a couple of collapsible trolleys for our trip to Brownsea Island this summer camp.

Here's to the next 12 months, let's make it a good one!

Carl Sturges
Quartermaster

Booking Secretary's Report

Booking continue to come in, several regular and returning hirers. It's all good!

Jess Cobb
Booking Secretary

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Income	2024/25	2023/24
Subscriptions	15,555.00	12,111.00
Gift Aid	1,659.51	1,200.86
Donations	15.00	230.00
Grants	2,850.00	6,800.00
Activities	10,863.49	6,882.41
Fund Raising	2,202.02	2,460.99
Hut Hire	2,952.00	3,907.00
Bank Interest	929.18	0.00
Miscellaneous/Uniform/Badges	158.50	144.00
Excess of Expenditure over Income		N/A
	<u>37,184.70</u>	<u>33,736.26</u>

Expenditure	2024/25	2023/24
Capitation	8,003.00	6,896.00
Termly Floats (prev. Section Expenses)	3,598.00	2,512.00
Premises - Services	5,176.86	5,946.82
Premises - Other	1,715.13	1,268.51
Activities	14,641.39	8,644.95
New equipment	5,243.42	3,241.30
Scout Hut Improvements	11.98	1,759.14
Administration and Training	723.07	658.97
Miscellaneous/Uniform/Badges	515.80	1,011.70
Excess of Income over Expenditure	N/A	1,796.87
	<u>39,628.65</u>	<u>33,736.26</u>

Bank Reconciliation	3/31/2025	3/31/2024
Current Account	4,156.33	29,349.77
Instant Access Savings Account	10,157.93	25,695.87
95-Day Notice Savings Account	40,541.01	N/A
Surplus/(Loss) for year	(2,443.95)	1,796.87
	<u>52,411.32</u>	<u>56,842.51</u>

Independent Examiner's Report to the Trustees of the 1st Potton Scout Group (the 'Group')

I report on the accounts of the Group for the year ended 31 March 2025.

Respective responsibilities of the trustees and Independent Examiner

The Group's trustees are responsible for the preparation of the accounts for the Group. The Group's trustees consider that neither an audit nor an independent examination is required for this year under section 144(2) of the Charities Act 2011 (the '2011 Act') but have opted to have an independent examination.

It is my responsibility to:

- examine the accounts under section 145 of the 2011 Act; and
- to follow the procedures laid down in the general Directions given by the Charity Commission (under section 145(5)(b) of the 2011 Act; and
- state whether particular matters have come to my attention.

Basis of independent examiner's report

My examination was carried in accordance with general Directions given by the Charity Commission. An examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the Group 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 you as 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

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no material matters have come to my attention in connection with the examination which gives me cause to believe that in, any material respect:

- the accounting records were not kept in accordance with section 130 of the Charities Act; or
- the accounts did not accord with the accounting records; or
- the accounts did not comply with the applicable requirements concerning the form and content of accounts set out in the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 other than any requirement that the accounts give a 'true and fair' view which is not a matter considered as part of an independent examination.

I have no concerns and have come across no other matters in connection with the examination to which attention should be drawn in this report in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

Signature:

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a stylized 'I' followed by the word 'West'.

Name: Mr Ian West

Relevant professional qualification or body: CIMA (1-FVX1L)

Address: 156 Folly Lane, St Albans, AL3 5JG

Date: 26th June 2025.

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Group Scout Leader's Report

I am three years in my tenure as Group Scout Leader – now known as Group Lead Volunteer – and pleased with the progress we are making across the Group. There has been some ups and downs since my last report, but the former fair outweighs the latter. I reported last year that Group Lead Volunteer is a busy job and the support of the other volunteers at Group level and in the Trustee Board is greatly appreciated.

1st Potton is an active and growing Group with seven sections and the Forrester's Explorer Unit providing fantastic experiences for our young people. Here are some of my highlights from the last 12 months.

Leader Team

We have grown our leader team across all Sections with several volunteers deciding to take uniformed roles and work towards achieving their Wood Badges. We have continued to work well in teams across the Sections, which has led to our volunteers gaining skills and experiences quickly.

A good example of teamwork is this year's Group Camp, which built on the success of the Coronation Camp in 2023. It was even bigger and better with over 110 young people attending, or around 90% of our members. I must give thanks to Alasdair Perrin (aka Baloo) for the tremendous effort put into organising this camp, with support from Roy Snell and Neil Cobb. It was a big success in large part because of Baloo's effort.

There has been continued focus from the Scout Association on safety and safeguarding and as a Group we are carrying this through into our programmes and activities. This will be a continuous focus across the Group and all leaders are expected to ensure they follow all necessary guidance, such as following the guidance of the yellow card and completing detailed risk assessments.

Several leaders have qualified for their Wood Badges in the past year and we look forward to them being given their awards – well done Louise Esposito, Becky Perry and me too. Other leaders have worked diligently on gaining experience, attending training workshops or learning 'on the job' and I expect we will see more awards gained in the ensuing year. I hope we can continue this level of development in our

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volunteers as it's by helping them to gain additional skills that we can continue to offer quality Scouting for Potton's young people.

New Leaders

A constant challenge is the need to recruit adult volunteers. We've had much success in this area since our last AGM, attracting 12 new leaders who have all been warmly welcomed into the Group, either as members of the Trustee Board or in the Section teams: Graham Hill (Trustee), Carlton Avison (Raleigh), Rob Hulatt (Drake), Claire Framil Ross (Leopards), Molly White (Hazelnut), Rebecca Page (Drake), Katy Kirk (Panthers), Josh Gates (Group), Andrew Duggan (Trustee), Jane Delaney (Trustee), Alex Hollyman (Leopards) and Luke Savage (Leopards).

Sadly, we lost two members of the Woodland Beaver Colony team as Aimee Chapman and Mark Feasey have decided to continue their Scouting in other Groups in the County. However, this change opens the possibility of further collaboration between our two Beaver colonies. Jess Cobb has taken on the Team Leader role for Woodland and is already working closely with Becky Perry from Riverbank for programme planning, demonstrating excellent teamwork. On behalf of all the volunteers in the Group, I wish Aimee and Mark continued success in their Scouting.

The most significant development this year has been in the re-opening of Drake Troop in January 2024, led by Roy Snell. This is a fantastic achievement and I thank Roy for taking the lead, and passing on many skills to the newer leaders in the team. Thanks also to Jan May, Yvonne Humberstone, Alasdair Perrin and Neil Cobb for supporting the new section in getting off the Ground.

It was rewarding to see the Drake and Raleigh teams working together to run a very successful summer camp this year in Norfolk, another good example of our leaders working together in a team. Bravo.

Awards

I introduced a Group Scout Leader commendation, affectionately known as the Badger Award, to be given to young people who contribute to the success of the Group. Sadly, I have not received any nominations in the past 12 months, and I hope to breathe new life into this initiative in the next year and a similar accolade for adult volunteers who contribute widely across the Group.

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One final award traditionally presented at the AGM is for 'Services to the Hut.' There have been several worthy contenders this year, but a clear winner is Alasdair Perrin. The grounds have never looked so good, and the extra terrace reclaimed from the wild tangle of weeds is a great resource. Thank you, Alasdair.

Volunteers

All the sections have been busy this year, running a full and varied programme for our young people. There are reports from the Section Leaders to follow, but I wish to reiterate my sincere thanks to all our Group volunteers for their selfless dedication to providing an excellent Scouting experience in Potton, whether they have worn a uniform and run a weekly section or served tea and cakes at the St George's Day Parade, we simply couldn't do it without the whole team pulling together.

We must also remember the vital work done by the Trustee Board. While they may be less visible and smaller in number, their work is important to the success of the Group. Thank you to Sam (Chair), Julia (Treasurer), Graham, Carl, Jan and Peter.

Waiting List

Our waiting list keeps growing and we have more than 80 young people waiting to join the Group. This speaks volumes for the quality of the Scouting provided.

Inclusion

Sadly, I must report an increasing number of applications for financial support in paying for subs and activities from our members. It is our intention to provide Scouting for all in our community and I'm proud the Group has been able to support every application, enabling young people to continue their Scouting.

And finally

I am looking forward to the next twelve months as Group Lead Volunteer. I hope we continue to support each other, work harmoniously in building our great reputation for providing quality Scouting and giving our young people skills for life.

Andy Bargery
Group Lead Volunteer

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Hazelnut Squirrels Dray – Section Update

Two years. The first year was a whole learning curve. Learning how to sprinkle the right amount of love and encouragement on my squirrels, learning how to work with the most amazing team of leaders, and learning how to be the best mouse I can be.

The second year has been a whirlwind. From getting my Molly Mole as my right-hand woman, to getting 16 more squirrels to love and adore. The cave bus is still a favourite among the adults and the children, we watch them terrified to go in and by the end of the session we had confident squirrels crawling in and out.

Group camp was another hit this year, where my squirrels saw how amazing Potton Scout Group is as a whole and while we were there awarded two incredible squirrels their Acorn Award – the highest award for Squirrels.

Our everyday sessions included mud painting, first aid, being active, growing sunflowers and learning soft archery! We did a lot. All of this is not possible without the most amazing team behind my crazy ideas, Mole, Butterfly, Hawk and of course Newt who saves the day on a weekly basis!

Being in the community is a huge thing in Potton and our Squirrels were very proud to be a part of the remembrance parade and the St George's day parade. As well as that they have been litter picking as part of their local superhero badge.

Coming back in September we hope to invite another ten more squirrels to our group and maybe make a dent in the ever-growing waiting list. I am incredibly proud of this Section and in the words of Mouse, "a squirrel can do anything a Beaver, Cub or Scout can do!"

Charlotte Chalkley aka Mouse
Team Leader

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Woodland Beaver Colony – Section Update

Woodland Beaver Colony re-opened at the end of Spring term 2023, and welcomed 13 young people as new Beavers. It is led by me (Otter), and I am supported by Jess (Ratty) formally from Riverbank colony. Leigh (Buck), Tamzin (Fox) and Mark (Bear), who are Assistant Section Leaders (ASL).

Leigh and Mark have completed their initial ASL training, and together with me, they are working towards the Wood Badge Award

1st Term

For our first term, we concentrated on getting to know each other; taking part in lots of games to encourage team building, completing crafting activities, and generally settling the young people (YP) into their new experience at Woodland colony.

During the colder/wetter weather, most of our meetings were spent in the Scout Hut. However, we still managed to spend some time outside, and the Beavers achieved their first activity badge: Health and fitness.

To encourage their creativity and sense of inclusion, we asked all YP to suggest activities for next term, and incorporated everyone's ideas into the planning. Suggestions included: Hiking, scavenger hunts, rock climbing and even a trip to Italy!

We were also able to end the term with a fantastic Easter surprise - one of our YP's parents kindly brought in a number of rabbits, which the Beavers all thoroughly enjoyed engaging with, and learning about! This kind gesture highlighted how invaluable it is to have support from our parents and carers.

2nd Term

Our first meeting ended with 12 of our colony being invested!

The Beavers used household recycling to make wacky robots, and achieve their Builder activity badge

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To celebrate the arrival of British Summer Time, and to tie-in with our first half of terms theme of 'The Great outdoors', we utilised the green spaces surrounding the hut, to play games and continue promoting team-building.

The beavers had their first camp! This was particularly notable, as a lot of the YP were only aged 3 and 4 during the COVID pandemic, meaning a lot of them had never stayed away from home - a big weekend for all of us, and great fun!!!

All 9 Beavers that stayed overnight were awarded their first night away staged badge.

To mark the end of half term break, we took the Beavers on a very successful and sunny hike up Deepdale, to explore the forest and wildlife, practice mindfulness, and build dens.

The theme for this half of the term, is 'Community'. For our first meeting back, we celebrated Pride month with a number of activities, including a visit from a rainbow guide leader, who kindly volunteered to paint the YP faces!!

To acknowledge the Beaver who suggested we visit Italy, we held our very own Italian night! Sadly, the budget couldn't stretch to a few nights in Tuscany, so we learnt some fun facts about the geography, history and culture of Italy, and made home-made Pizzas!

For the remainder of the term, we have a trip to the fire station planned, a litter-pick, and a policeman named Bear coming to talk to the Beavers about stranger danger and road safety

Looking to the future

All leaders will continue to complete their training towards the wood badge, and already have several courses booked throughout the year.

Further steps are being taken to include the YP's parents and carers more, such as the recent creation of a WhatsApp group to share photos of activity participation.

A 'Parenting Rota' is also being considered, to offer opportunities for parents to showcase any interesting hobbies they feel the Beavers will be interested in, or simply just want to see what their young person gets up to at Woodland Colony!

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As previously referred to, support and engagement from our YP's parents is invaluable, so we're keen to encourage their involvement in whatever way we can.

Now our colony is finding its legs, we are going to discuss how to best share the planning between the leaders, incorporate more opportunities to earn badges, and gradually introduce more traditional aspects of scouting; fire lighting, knife/axe work, hiking, and generally spending more time in nature whilst we have the day light.

We also want to continue consulting our YP for their ideas on future meetings / terms - this is a guaranteed way of ensuring they continue to have fun whilst learning, and also alleviates some planning pressures from the leaders.

Aimee Chapman aka Otter
Team Leader

Riverbank Beaver Colony – Section Update

Riverbank Colony has had another year of fun, friendship, learning, adventures and noise....lots of noise! Throughout the year we have maintained a section size of 18 young people which is determined by the number of adult helpers. We have said farewell but not goodbye to 7 young people who have continued their Scouting journey with Cubs; and welcomed 4 from Squirrels and 4 directly into Beavers.

Our programme has been put together to be varied, making best use of the outdoors space we have access to, light, weather and has leveraged parent skills and hobbies where possible. The dynamic of the colony has shifted over the course of the last 12 months, with the majority of Riverbank Beavers now under the age of 7, and we have adapted the programme and complexity of activities in response to this. Activities have included star gazing, cooking, fire lighting, litter picking and learning about environmental issues such as access to clean water, to name a few. The standout experience was of course Group Camp which all of Riverbank attended, with the climbing wall being a massive hit. During the year we have awarded 218 challenge, activity and staged badges and had 7 young people achieve their Bronze Chief Scout Award.

Indirectly linked to the section, I'm pleased to have been awarded my Nights Away Permit in July (thanks to Panther Cub's for letting me use their summer camp for my

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assessment). This means we can look to offer overnight trips for Beavers in the future.

I want to thank those that have given generously with their time, ideas, patience and support in running the Colony. In particular, Mouse (Charlotte) and Raksha (Lauren) who whilst having their own sections to support, have regularly turned out on a Thursday to keep us in ratio; Roger, Cheryl and Rob, who give up their quiet time most Thursday evenings to also help; King Louie (Neil) and Baloo (Alasdair) for giving me confidence with the more adventurous outdoors stuff and Akela (Louise) and Ratty (Jess) for their encouragement. I must also thank our parents who have consistently and diligently followed our programme, supporting their young person with any extra equipment or items needed for sessions.

Whilst we have a great team, Riverbank are desperately short of their own uniformed leaders, having to rely on leaders from other sections. This poses a challenge for help running events outside of the weekly meeting and we would very much like to recruit a second uniformed leader dedicated to Riverbank Colony.

Finally, we are very much looking forward to working more closely with Woodland Beaver Colony this coming year, particularly joining together to offer our young people events or opportunities that would not be logistically or financially viable as a single colony.

Becky Perry aka Newt
Team Leader

Leopards Cub Pack – Section Update

Over the past 12 months Leopards have visited Shuttleworth for a raft building evening, had a camp at Boyd, been Orienteering at Sandy RSPB as part of the District event, we followed a route around Biggleswade to help with our Road Safety badge, attended the St Georges day parade, we have completed the Naturalist badge, Gardener badge, in July we went to the Water activity day at Grafham, and several of the section attended the District Fishing event at Greensands fishery in June.

Last year we visited Cockayne Hatley Church as part of the My Faith badge, we have had an Archery session run by Kaa and Panther's Baloo at Potton. At the end of last term we had an evening at Target Fitness to complete the Athletics

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badge. We have had a trip to Whipsnade zoo as part of the Naturalist badge, the Cubs have done knife skills and climbing at our June group camp, they have also earned their Money Skills badge which we also combined with the International badge as we learnt about customs and cultures as well as currency and how money is earned and spent in other countries. The Cubs have earned many badges in the last 12 months and we will try to get a few more up to their Chief Scout Silver before they leave us.

We currently have 16 members, (3 of whom are already over 10) so our numbers are fairly low at present making it much easier to plan – and quieter! We have just taken in two new young people from Beavers. Lower numbers does help the new ones settle in more quickly and gives us a greater opportunity to get to know them.

We are taking part in the forthcoming Biggleswade District Cub Camp at the end of September which has a Space theme so will be covering our Astronomer badge as part of our Autumn badge work and plans are afoot to have an exciting trip for the Cubs' Christmas treat.

I am grateful for the help of several parents who have stepped in to cover leader shortages during the year, I am very grateful that we have recently gained two new leaders so hopefully we will be able to plan some more weekend events and camps in the next 12 months.

Our plans for 2024 / 25 will include Astronomer, Emergency Aid and Fire Safety, preparation for Remembrance Sunday events and topping up / completing some Challenge badges towards the Silver award.

Jan May aka Akela
Team Leader

Panthers Cub Pack – Section Update

As a summary Panthers have had an amazing year full of adventure and mischief. The cubs have been on a journey of learning that has been so much fun they haven't even realised how much they have grown. **Headline highlight is that we have attended 4 Camps, awarded 208 hard earned badges and been overjoyed to give out 9 silver awards.** (this makes us the busiest section) personal opinion ☺

Panthers currently have 30 YP and 6 leaders.

The leader team is strong and offer a range of skills helping us to deliver our outstanding balanced programme. 3 of our leaders have attained their wood beads

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(a couple are still waiting delivery) and we hold two nights away permits. We also hold an archery and rifle permit between the team. All of the leaders have completed the mandatory training and are on the training path towards wood beads. All leaders have booked on for some CPD training offered by district.

Panthers continues its inclusivity policy and is open to all cubs whatever their needs. We try our best to accommodate all and are proud of our methods of inclusion from the lego box to an allergy SPOC for away weekends. We strive to be better and better at this so no child is prohibited when scouting.

Panthers ended last year with our activity camp 'Panthers Activate'. This was held at Tolmers Scout Camp. This was an activity based camp with the cubs did Archery, Rifles, Climbing wall, Hungry hippos, water wars and many more. We also did bust craft skills. This our first 3 night/4 day camp. Despite the rain we all had an amazing time.

The year started with a bang. We had two overnight adventures in the autumn term.

We attended Pilots and Pillows. This was an amazing event held at RAF Hendon. The cubs stayed a night in the hanger and took part in multiple activities including Robot wars (which they loved) and the silent disco. Personally I loved wondering around the museum in the dark and getting a good look at the planes close up.

Our next adventure just the next weekend was District Cub camp. This camp was aimed at the older cubs and was a back to basics camp. The cubs enjoyed cooking their own meals learning compass skills. They found the skinning and preparing of the rabbit and bird particularly gross but intriguing. However the laser tag was the clear winner with our cubs sneaking as any go's as they could at it.

We did various badges including the science badge over the term. We had a night hike and played an abundance of games. We also entered a team into the district shooting competition. The cubs had an evening practicing on the range and the top 10 cubs were entered. I'm proud to say James Wing was the 2nd place individual winner.

We also has a good turnout of 21 cubs for The Remembrance Day Parade.

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We had 9 cubs leaving in that term and took great lengths to assist them to achieve the Silver awards. The programme was designed with this in mind and the cubs that were moving on were given extra tasks and a more advanced programme to help them meet the targets. The cubs that left us were first cubs during lockdown and we called them the Zoomers. They started their cub journey on zoom and I'm so proud to have guided them through their journeys and helped them achieve the silver award. It was also a very special moment for me and I admit I cried as I said goodbye to the first Cub I had invested.



The term ended with our Christmas treat. This year we took the cubs to gravity in Stevenage and took advantage of the amazing deal they offer they scouts. The cubs enjoyed this activity and the ordering of the Domino's Pizza is a winner. I also have to recognise in this report how accommodating Gravity was even offering the cubs drinks and slushies free of charge. I apologised to the parents for the E numbers all the cubs had.

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At the end of the term with 9 cubs leaving the pack felt small. I have never had the pack at such low numbers and it felt strange. However this didn't last long and we soon welcomed our new starters. With two beaver colonies offering willing victims to join us we were back up to 30 again before we knew it.

The spring term started slowly for us. The weather was cold and with lots of newer cubs we tailored our meetings to accommodate this. We started early on with doing our first aid badge, stage 1 for the new ones and stage 3 for our now older cubs. We had a special guest in the form of Dr Splosh as the cubs call him come to teach us CPR. As part of this we took part in the Air Ambulance Challenge Badge and the cubs did various tasks to support the Air ambulance and we raised £55. The cubs that took part and completed the challenges all received a blanket badge.

We also invited the parents in for a games night this term. The cubs revelled in racing against their parents and a healthy competitive vibe was achieved. This also gave the parents an insight into just what we do and how beneficial the cubs are for their YP.

This term we worked towards the collectors badge with all cubs taking part and presenting their collections. We also invited Claire Hulett into the group and did Cooking with Claire. The cubs made soup.

Baloo and I travelled to the Outdoor Expo in Birmingham and got loads of outdoor adventure ideas as well as looking at equipment to invest in.

We had a trip to Whipsnade Zoo. This was a district cubs event. It rained all day but we all had the best day.

We also did our first long staged hike. We walked over 7 miles in 3 hours to achieve a stage hike badge for all that took part. We hiked the greensands ridge and it was a spectacular effort by all the cubs. This has opened up the idea bank. We are working towards our next staged hike which is planned for next spring.

This term also saw us celebrating St Georges day and had a good turnout for the St Georges day parade and service in town.

We ended the term investing our new starters. We now have a large number of girls in the section and am proud to say currently we are about 50/50 ratio of male and female. This brings a calmer atmosphere to our meetings. We have changed

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and adapted our meetings and much to my enjoyment and Baloo's dislike we have started to do more craft. Years of being a brown owl are now coming out. ☺

As we moved into the summer term we didn't stop challenging the cubs. We worked on our sports badge. We took the cubs to Biggleswade rugby club and gave them a taster session. This was loved by all, developing team game skills and just trying something new.

We did pioneering, knots and had a great time making carry stretchers. (well we attempted). We cooked pizza on a camp fire and spent most evenings outdoors. We tried circus skills, had a sports day and of course had a huge water fight.

We also completed our cyclist's badge. The Cubs maintained their bikes and did a planned cycle route from Potton to Sandy.

The cubs also attended two camps this term. We had our annual Group camp. This was a roaring success and with it being only one night it was a perfect introduction to camping for our newer cubs.

We also attended the district cub water activity day at Grafham water. This is the 3rd year we have attended this and its an amazing day where the cubs have tried SUP, Canoeing, rafting and kayaking.

To end the year we held our own activity camp 'im a cub get me stuck in here'. We did a im a celebrity style camp with the cubs doing amazing activities and doing bush tucker trials to earn stars. Yes the cubs did eat bugs and try weird dishes. This was an amazing camp and Newt earned her nights away permit.

As we move into the next autumn term we have many adventures to look forward too. Again this term we will say good bye to some amazing cubs who will earn their silver awards. We are hoping to hand out another 7 this term.

We have our big London adventure to look forward to this term and planning is in full swing. Over the summer we have attended various events and community fetes to raise money by offering fairground games like hook a duck and pick a lolly. We have an amazing itinerary planned.

The cubs will be sleeping on the scout camp ship moored in the docklands and then have a tourist day of the sights of London planned. They will do water activities and learn history.

We also have the district camp that is open to all cubs this year very soon. Its space themed and we cant wait for our far out adventures.

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As I reflect on this year despite the pulls on leaders time, the changing in circumstances and the up and down nature of life the panthers team have pulled together to deliver an outstanding, adventurous and FUN year for our YP. I'm proud of all we have achieved and look forward to Panthers being even better next year. Well done team

Raleigh Scout Troop - Section Update

It's been another busy year, and one where we have awarded a huge number of challenge and activity badges to those who have taken part consistently. We have undertaken a number of activities over the year including first aid, fire lighting, saw, knife and axe work, navigation and map reading, day and night hikes, cooking, wide games, water sports, car mechanics, astronomy, cycling, archery, circus skills and more. Our gang show was a new one for many Scouts not used to performing, but one which ended up being incredibly fun and very rewarding; a number of our young people overcame personal challenges to make it happen.

There are still very few district events taking place at the Scout age group, but we won the District Raft Race, and the impressive trophy is on display in the Scout hut display cabinet until September. We are therefore continuing with our programme of running what would previously have been District-level events, and will do that as joint Raleigh-Drake Troop events moving forward. Scouts and leaders have also continued to actively support the County-level Water Activity Days (WAD) run so competently by Luton Sea Scouts.

All in all, that means we are covering everything needed to offer a wide range of experiences for our scouts, and to give those who stay with us, and participate regularly, the chance to gain their Gold Chief Scouts award. Four of our oldest Scouts received it this year.

The opening of Drake Troop has been a great help, despite releasing Roy from the leadership team to set it up. This is the first year we have seen a planned reduction in numbers, getting us down to a more manageable level, despite continuing to take in more Cubs, and a small number from the waiting list.

Summer camp this year was a joint Raleigh-Drake Troops camp (our first) to Decoy Broad Scout camp site and activity centre in the Norfolk Broads. We try to provide a

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range of different camp experiences over the years and this year it was canoeing and kayaking (plus sailing provided by another Scout group for a lucky few). It was a good chance to make the most of our leaders' canoe and kayak permits, building on the shorter WAD experiences to develop some paddling skills and meeting some of the water sports badge requirements. Summer Camp is also a good chance for Scouts to camp out under the stars (in bivvy bags and hammocks), and this year was our first visit to the beach. The new star tent made an excellent outdoor cinema!

It is worth saying that Summer Camps, as we know them, would not be possible without the support of others. A huge thank you to Sara Levesley for allowing us to use a school minibus, and to Barton Scout Group for letting us hire theirs. And to Andrew and Katie Reed for lending us a van and providing us with an experienced camp mother. This time we took 20 scouts with 6 full-time leaders, and one part-time leader.

Over the last year we have focussed on stabilising the troop and regaining our culture and discipline following a period pre-Drake Troop when it was oversized and difficult to manage. We want the troop to be a relaxed environment which reflects its voluntary status, without the need for school-style discipline. There have been some challenges, but we hope to complete the process this academic year. Our oldest Scouts are a huge cohort from one year group which will amount to nearly half the Troop until the end of the coming academic year. The following year should be more balanced.

Having lost Roy and two occasional helpers, longer term we need more Scout leaders, as Raleigh is running at or close to minimum leader numbers for effective running of the troop (but not in terms of minimum Scout Association ratios).

For summer camp, scaling up or running separate Summer Camps will be a necessity. We won't be able to increase the numbers commensurate with the increase in Scout numbers (as the 2 troops grow in size) unless we can find more adults willing to help out for all or part of the week. That is particularly needed for the adventurous activity day(s) when we will probably need a dedicated pair of roving adults in a minibus, and a third activity group with its own pair of leaders (with or without permits). We have reached the point where we can't continue to pull the camp Chef away to meet those roles. We also need more female leaders at camp, and at our weekly troop meetings, being almost 50:50 male:female across each troop, which is not reflected in our leadership team.

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Peter White
Team Leader

Drake Scout Troop - Section Update

Well, what a start for a new Troop.

Drake Scout Troop re-opened on the 11th January 2024 with two scouts Lewis and Eve transferring from the Raleigh troop who became the patrol leaders for the two troops and myself as Scout leader. We had eight cubs join us from the two cub packs, and we were soon joined by Rob a parent that now has become a valuable section leader. We started off with learning scouting skills like Pioneering, cooking, fire lighting and many other Challenging Skills, by July we had thirteen Scouts regularly attending. On the St Georges Day event we had eleven Scouts, we had seven attending the Water Activity Day at Luton Hoo, which was a joint event with the Raleigh Troop doing all sorts of water activity from sailing, paddle boarding and raft building. Great fun day gaining many badges along the way.

We then had all twelve Scouts attend the Potton scout Group camp in June. another great weekend.

And to finish it off we had seven scouts come to Scout summer camp on the Norfolk Broads in July. Again, a joint event with Raleigh troop.

I close by thanking all those that have supported Drake and myself over the past six months. Rob, Jan, Yvonne, Alastair, Neil, Peter (five of which have their own sections to serve) and Rebecca a parent that helps about three times a month, plus the Scouts and the all-important Parents.

Drake needs one or two more helpers to support itself.

Roy Snell
Team Leader

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Chair's Report

I would like to thank all the leaders, volunteers and contributors to the Group who provide so much to our community and its young people. A special thanks to the Group Lead volunteer, Andy, who enables all the volunteers to do their role.

Thank you for the opportunity to be Chair of the Group. Sadly, I must now stand down from this position due to work commitments.

Sam Wilamowski
Chair

Treasurer's Report

For the year ending 31 March 2024, the Scout Group has a cash surplus of £1,796.87.

As you will see from the spreadsheet below, all of the income categories have increased, which is fantastic! The subscriptions total has increased significantly. Thank you to the Leaders who helped me with chasing missing payments from parents.

The activities income and expenditure are more closely aligned, which is great. Again, thank you to the Leaders who helped me in chasing missing activity payments from parents. It is quite time-consuming tracking payments from parents, as quite often incorrect payment references are used, or payments are grouped together, and they are hard to find in the spreadsheet! From September, I will send regular emails to the Group Leaders of all activity payments received, as you all know who you are expecting payments from and for which events.

The Fund Raising total increased slightly. This was due to the Murder Mystery event which the group were involved with. The remaining money was the profit made from the Burns Night event.

I have yet to complete the Gift Aid claim for the 23/24 tax year, but as you can see, we received £1,200 from the previous tax year which is a significant amount. I am thankful to the leaders for continuing to send me Gift Aid forms for their members.

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Lastly, rather than having the Virgin savings account with a low interest rate and a large balance in the current account, I have now opened a fixed rate savings account and an instant access savings account with Lloyds. It is great that we are now earning some interest!

I would like to take this opportunity to thank you all for your continued support.

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Accounts as at 31st March 2024					
Income	2023/24	2022/23	Expenditure	2023/24	2022/23
Subscriptions	12,111.00	9,400.00	Capitation	6,896.00	6,281.50
Gift Aid	1,200.86	0.00	Termly Floats (prev. Section Expenses)	2,512.00	1,886.00
Donations	230.00	134.75	Premises - Services	5,946.82	6,556.11
Grants	6,800.00	2,760.00	Premises - Other	1,268.51	2,708.30
Activities	6,882.41	5,877.00	Activities	8,644.95	10,937.47
Fund Raising	2,460.99	2,144.50	New equipment	3,241.30	354.65
Hut Hire	3,907.00	3,734.54	Scout Hut Improvements	1,759.14	1,151.26
Bank Interest	0.00	66.70	Administration and Training	658.97	20.00
Miscellaneous	144.00	0.00	Miscellaneous	1,011.70	2,021.17
Excess of Expenditure over Income	0.00	0.00	Excess of Income over Expenditure	1,796.87	(7,798.97)
	33,736.26	24,117.49		33,736.26	24,117.49
Bank Reconciliation					
	31/03/2024	31/03/2023			
Current Account	29,349.77	27,552.90			
Virgin Deposit Account	25,695.87	25,442.71			
Petty Cash	0.00	42.65			
(Profit)/Loss for year	1,796.87	(7,798.97)			
	56,842.51	45,239.29			

NB I edited this sheet after the independent review as the formula was showing the (profit)/Loss as a loss instead of a profit. JSS 25th August 2024.

Fundraising Secretary Report

We do not currently have a Fundraising Secretary. However, our dedicated team of volunteers has been very active raising funds for the Group. Events included our regular Burns Night, which returned to pre-Covid levels of success, selling burgers at Party on Potton, and supporting the Potton Playhouse in hosting a very successful evening at the HQ. Plans for a quiz night have also been suggested.

I hope we can appoint a new Fundraising Secretary to support us during the next year and continue to contribute to our Group's development and keeping costs for our members affordable and accessible for all.

Andy Bargery
Group Scout Leader

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Quartermaster's Report

It has been a busy year across all sections and that has meant plenty of new equipment has been requested and bought by the Group.

The main items are 4x impressive bell tents, 2x Dutch ovens, new knives, axes and saw horses, several lengths of high quality rope, small indoor tents for Beavers, a magnificent star tent, new projection equipment, wireless radios, 2x new Trangia cooking sets, map cases and compasses, and some new hi-vis jackets. Much of this new equipment was funded by a grant we secured from the Scout Association for setting up the new Drake Scout section.

We were also awarded a Grant from Central Bedfordshire Council, which enabled us to purchase some Resusci Annies and AED training kits, which we have already put to good use with the Scouts sections.

The equipment store is now packed to the roof and we will need to find a new storage solution soon if we are to get the best use out of our kit.

I'd like to thank a couple of our unsung heroes of the group, Peter for his sterling efforts whenever a tent gets damaged and needs repair and Neil for his sharpening skills keeping knives and axes safe and ready to use.

It has been a pleasure to be the Group's quartermaster this year and I am happy to continue in this role for the next 12 months.

Carl Sturges
Quartermaster

Booking Secretary's Report

It has been a good year with regards to the use of HQ and with bookings. The HQ is now in use by sections 4 nights a week as well as other occasional events e.g. Woodlands Flames and games evening one Friday, Group camp etc.

We have a number of regular hirers, TJ's Dance class, Ensemble of friend's choir, Potton Karate and the Veg box people.

1st Potton Scout Group

AGM 2024 Reports



We've also had some returning ad hoc hirers e.g. Little city, The Bedfordshire Geological society, POP and Potton Dance Academy, Drunk and Disorderly (for band rehearsals) as well as private hirers for birthday/anniversary and New Years eve parties etc.

We had Potton Playhouse back in November ('23), holding a murder mystery evening and they are booked in again for this October to hold another murder mystery evening. We also have Sandy Viking Cubs returning for another camp later in the year, they reported they really enjoyed their last camp with us, especially with the activities we put on for them (Bushcraft Skills). We've also had a Duke of Edinburgh award group camp over.

All of the bookings have been friendly and have left the hall in a good state of cleanliness. One of the parties we had in even brought fabric to cover the walls and attach decorations too. Following the party they very kindly donated all of the wall coving fabric to the Scout group for us to use in the future.

Jess Cobb
Booking Secretary

1st Potton Scout Group
Accounts as at 31st March 2024

Income	2023/24	2022/23
Subscriptions	12,111.00	9,400.00
Gift Aid	1,200.86	0.00
Donations	230.00	134.75
Grants	6,800.00	2,760.00
Activities	6,882.41	5,877.00
Fund Raising	2,460.99	2,144.50
Hut Hire	3,907.00	3,734.54
Bank Interest	0.00	66.70
Miscellaneous	144.00	0.00
Excess of Expenditure over Income	0.00	0.00
	<u>33,736.26</u>	<u>24,117.49</u>

Expenditure	2023/24	2022/23
Capitation	6,896.00	6,281.50
Termly Floats (prev. Section Expenses)	2,512.00	1,886.00
Premises - Services	5,946.82	6,556.11
Premises - Other	1,268.51	2,708.30
Activities	8,644.95	10,937.47
New equipment	3,241.30	354.65
Scout Hut Improvements	1,759.14	1,151.26
Administration and Training	658.97	20.00
Miscellaneous	1,011.70	2,021.17
Excess of Income over Expenditure	1,796.87	(7,798.97)
	<u>33,736.26</u>	<u>24,117.49</u>

Bank Reconciliation	31/03/2024	31/03/2023
Current Account	29,349.77	27,552.90
Virgin Deposit Account	25,695.87	25,442.71
Petty Cash	0.00	42.65
(Profit)/Loss for year	(1,796.87)	(7,798.97)
	<u>53,248.77</u>	<u>45,239.29</u>

Independent Examiner's Report to the Trustees of the 1st Potton Scout Group (the 'Group')

I report on the accounts of the Group for the year ended 31 March 2024.

Respective responsibilities of the trustees and Independent Examiner

The Group's trustees are responsible for the preparation of the accounts for the Group. The Group's trustees consider that neither an audit nor an independent examination is required for this year under section 144(2) of the Charities Act 2011 (the '2011 Act') but have opted to have an independent examination.

It is my responsibility to:

- examine the accounts under section 145 of the 2011 Act; and
- to follow the procedures laid down in the general Directions given by the Charity Commission (under section 145(5)(b) of the 2011 Act; and
- state whether particular matters have come to my attention.

Basis of independent examiner's report

My examination was carried in accordance with general Directions given by the Charity Commission. An examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the Group 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 you as 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

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no material matters have come to my attention in connection with the examination which gives me cause to believe that in, any material respect:

- the accounting records were not kept in accordance with section 130 of the Charities Act; or
- the accounts did not accord with the accounting records; or
- the accounts did not comply with the applicable requirements concerning the form and content of accounts set out in the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 other than any requirement that the accounts give a 'true and fair' view which is not a matter considered as part of an independent examination.

I have no concerns and have come across no other matters in connection with the examination to which attention should be drawn in this report in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

Signature: 

Name: Mr Ian West

Relevant professional qualification or body: CIMA (1-FVX1L)

Address: 156 Folly Lane, St Albans, AL3 5JG

Date: 23.8.24

1ST POTTON SCOUT GROUP

England & Wales - Charity number 274416

Accounts

Group Report – 2021

A different Year would be an understatement! and a year that also sees our GSL and SL leaving the Group after many years so big boots to fill for all of us.

All the sections have battled hard to keep going throughout the year. Zoom has become something we are all now familiar with! We have come out the other side and seem to have survived. Back to almost normal with sections able to meet with unlimited numbers inside or out. (although, we are all mostly outside whatever the weather) I think masks and hand washing will stay as will sanitiser!

All sections have good numbers and mostly full.

Forester Explorers are back with us and meeting weekly on a Monday evening after Panther Cubs which is great.

During lockdown the hall, toilets and corridors has been painted.

Our Beaver section has 2 new adults - Paula and Laura who have slotted in perfectly and our young Leader /explorer Bea is back as well, so the colony is going very well. Peter has now become the Scout Leader with the troop and at the moment the troop is full.

Our waiting list is rather long with a good number being 6, so another Beaver colony is needed!

Recruitment for Leaders is at the top of the list of important tasks needing immediate attention, as is new members for our group executive and some for helping around the site.

Our work at the site continues as we improve the area to lay to grass and wildflowers etc and to give more area for camping and the young people to enjoy. We are also clearing the bottom left corner to make room for a new log store, which one of our scouts Owen Smith is doing for his D of E and to hopefully have some alta fires and maybe a pizza oven. We have had a workday and the plan will be to have regular work days to keep on top of all the jobs on site. The site would benefit from a ride on lawn mower which would enable us to cut the grass ourselves. We now have 2 strimmers working, 1 having been mended last week and a new one just purchased to enable 2 people to trim at the same time.

Thanks To All Our Leaders: Katie, Paula, Laura, Bea, Jan, Emma, Tom, Maggie, Yvonne, Alasdair, Phil, Keith, Peter, Michael, Carl, Ben, Marc, Andy, Hazel, Helen and James you have all been fantastic this last year supporting our young people and each other through a challenging time.

Thank you to our Ex Committee: Bob, Debbie, Kate, Paula, Kylie, Carl and Lorna your hard work and commitment is fantastic .

Our Sincere Thanks go to Andy for his unfailing commitment to the Group and the Scout Troop since he has been involved. All the adults and young people across the years have benefitted in so many ways and you have made a real lasting impact, and To Lorna for all her support and understanding.

The Group moves forward in great shape for the future because of all your hard work.

Maggie Deputy Group Scout Leader

Raleigh Scout Troop - Section Update

This time last year the troop was holding meetings every Wednesday on zoom, after missing only 4 sessions (I think) due to lockdown. Michael Smith (who also helped the whole group) and Andy Gibb really helped get us going on zoom from a very early stage. The troop has met (physically or on zoom) consistently throughout the year, and continued to run a full and varied programme with activity and challenge badges being earned.

When allowed to meet physically in smaller numbers we operated in two groups alternating a week in person/a week on zoom, with 3 leaders running each group. We had slightly lower numbers of around 15-20 each meeting.

We have seen a number of permanent changes over the year.

- Andy has handed over the Section Leader role to Peter, but been a great support in the process.
- A number of cubs have move up as spaces have become available.
- The troop has been running at full capacity of 30 Scouts for a few months now.
- We have effectively lost four leaders by the end of this term, but have also gained two.
- From September I will be the only uniformed leader.

Summer camp has had to be cancelled again this year, after numerous challenges associated with COVID-19 restrictions. We are planning a two day expedition hike later this month.

Peter White

Section Leader – Raleigh Troop

Leopards Cub Pack Report – Jan May (Akela) Cub Scout Leader

Leopard Cubs now have 22 Cubs on the register. There are 4 who have turned 10 and already asking about moving on to Scouts. We do have a few very young children at the moment because of the situation with Beavers.

I am running the section with 2 warranted Leaders; Tom Hammond and Emma Westmorland, but I would really like some extra help to run the evenings or to cover when a leader is absent, as well as help with planning, collecting in and chasing subs, keeping OSM up to date etc.

We do have a volunteer Assistant who is waiting for his DBS check to go through, he is a very keen camper so we are hoping that we will be able to plan some hikes and overnight camps once he is cleared and camping is permitted.

We have tried to run a varied and exciting programme throughout the last 12 months, but found online scouting very challenging ; quite a few Cubs dropped out whilst we were online but do seem to have reappeared now. Maggie and I decided that it would be beneficial to merge both packs for some of the Zoom sessions , these ranged from scavenger hunts, RSPB big garden birdwatch, Lego evening, clay modelling, Chinese new year activities to name a few.

It was a steep learning curve to get to grips with zoom meetings and didnt suit everyone but we did manage to keep going. Leopards were sent Challenges to help them with some at-home badge work, and they provided some photographs which went into the newsletters we were using in 2020.

During the first relaxation of lockdown we did several challenge hikes, and renewed our Promises at Sutton Church, where the Cubs were also presented with the Queen's birthday badge.

We have managed to keep the badge achievements going, 2 Cubs who have just moved on to Scouts have earned their Chief Scouts Silver Award and I am finding it much easier to keep track of badges now we are using OSM to plan and record attendance.

Emma has now set up a facebook group for Leopards , following Panthers successful one. The parents do seem to like it.

Our plans for the future are very much in the hands of the Covid regulations, but we are hoping that we will be able to visit Boyd field for our final evening's activity and hopefully a camp in September.

Panthers Cub Pack Report – Maggie Harris (Akela) Cub Scout Leader

A very challenging year!

We continued zoom from March to the middle of July 2020 which was hard work but fun and different. The cubs and Leaders became very stagnant by July though, there is only so many things you can do on zoom.

So as soon as we could be face to face outdoors in middle August we were straight back meeting.

With Swedish Log Fires, Marshmallows, campfires and wide games it was great to just be outdoors together. We had to do some alternate weeks as were limited to 15.

Sadly it was back to Zoom in October and we carried on until April 2021 we enjoyed some visiting people on zoom to add some excitement With Astronomy, Art, Lego and Sam's Safaris . We also welcomed a religious speaker as part of World Challenge and a Policewoman to help us complete our Home Safety Badge.

Biscuit making live on zoom was great fun and very successful as was pancake making! A bit of parent participation is always fun.

Since 12th April 2021 we have been back Face To Face and with the full pack which is 27 at the moment. Outdoors as much as we can even in the rain. We have done Circus skills with Baloo's brother Ash which was brilliant.

Badge work has been ongoing and full on Dave the district badge secretary has been delivering them to me all through lockdown which has been fantastic, and I posted them out to the cubs which they also looked forward to receiving as well as their at home packs delivered by Postman Baloo which again made a huge difference to the cubs and put a smile on a few faces.

We have welcomed new members on zoom , Invested and said goodbye as they move to scouts.

It has taught me that anything is possible it just needs a bit of imagination and planning.

Thank you to our Leader Team Alasdair Yvonne Phil and Keith you have kept Panthers going in very difficult and challenging times.

Special thanks also to Katie who has helped all through with zoom and face to face which has made a real difference. Akela

Riverbank Beaver Colony – Katie Mansion

We've had a challenging year at beavers since the last AGM, as the pandemic has forced us online, and our young people find zoom difficult, especially on top of all the zoom they've done for school. But we have been thrilled to be back face to face, and with two wonderful new section assistants. We've had a strong focus on nature this term as we have been outdoors, starting with investigation the bug hotels and the pond in the corner of the field. We've had a campfire, learnt about maps, and we've officially welcomed 10 new beavers to the colony already! We're very excited for summer, as well be visiting the RSPB, doing our international and builder badges, and having a visit from Sam's Safaris.

We currently have 18 beavers in the colony, and will be looking to take on a few more in the coming weeks. We have three leaders, a brilliant young leader, and two helpful cubs!

Katie (Bumblebee), Paula (Heron) and Laura (Otter).

Chairman's Report

Chairman's Report 2021

I started last year's report saying it was one of the strangest situations ever in Scouting and in the events we've all faced. Unfortunately, so many have been so badly affected in one way or another, some even losing their lives.

Having moved away to Norfolk and being in lockdown for much of that time, I feel somewhat distant from what is going on in Potton Scout Group. I know it has been so difficult for all of us, and I give my sincere thanks to everybody who has kept things going during these really difficult times. It has been good that from April 12th we have been able to meet again, and let's hope that this can continue going forward. I don't know what we would have done without zoom over the last 12 months!

The next year will see a number of changes in the Group. My heartfelt thanks go out to Andy Hope, who has done so much for the Group in the last 10 years and been a magnificent GSL. We look forward to giving him and the family a magnificent send off on 3rd July.

I would also like to thank Maggie for stepping into the GSL role. I know what a stirring job she has done and wish her the very best in the future. My thanks go to Kylie, who has done an outstanding job as Group Fundraiser, and Lorna for all her hard work in managing the Hall Bookings. With me now living in Norfolk I regrettably felt that now is the time for me to step down as Chair.

I would like to thank all those who have been involved in the improvements of the HQ, the grounds and the building, and of course our wonderful leaders and helpers, who have had to work especially hard this year to make things happen and who have achieved so much. And my sincere thanks go to them all.

With all these changes, it will be good to get a fresh input into the Group and we welcome more volunteers to take up this challenge.

Here in Potton we have a tremendous group and I would like to pass on my thanks and say how lucky we are to have so many willing, hard working, committed people in the group and on the Executive Committee who work so well together. Sometimes some of these jobs are carried out behind the scenes and people are not always aware of the amount of work that is done. I would like to emphasise that.

We have tried to keep the Exec Committee stable, and to that end, Andy Hope will step into the role of Chair, and Lorna and I will continue as Honorary Members.

I would also like to thank all of those who have assisted in the fundraising, and everybody that has supported the events which help the finances so much. Including, Potton Consolidated Charity for the grant they gave us this year.

Finally, we look forward to Scouting returning to how we know it in the not too distant future. And in the meantime, thank you all for your continued commitment to this excellent Group.

Bob Smith

Chair

Treasurer's Report

Independent Examiner's Report

Independent Examiner's Report to the Trustees of the 1st Pottton Scout Group (the 'Group')

I report on the accounts of the Group for the year ended 31 March 2021.

Respective responsibilities of the trustees and Independent Examiner

The Group's trustees are responsible for the preparation of the accounts for the Group. The Group's trustees consider that neither an audit nor an independent examination is required for this year under section 144(2) of the Charities Act 2011 (the '2011 Act') but have opted to have an independent examination.

It is my responsibility to:

- examine the accounts under section 145 of the 2011 Act; and
- to follow the procedures laid down in the general Directions given by the Charity Commission (under section 145(5)(b) of the 2011 Act; and
- state whether particular matters have come to my attention.

Basis of independent examiner's report

My examination was carried in accordance with general Directions given by the Charity Commission. An examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the Group and a comparison of the accounts presented with those records, though it should be noted that due to the pandemic a review of the accounting records was not possible. It also includes consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts, and seeking explanations from you as 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. It should be noted that due to the pandemic a review of the accounting records was not possible.

Independent examiner's statement

In connection with my examination, no matter has come to my attention 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 2011 Act; and
- to prepare accounts which accord with the accounting records and comply with the accounting requirements of the 2011 Act have not been met.

There are some variances between accounts for the year ending 31 March 2021 and the previous year, the most significant being around income. These are largely related to the pandemic and have been explained to my satisfaction.

Signature:



Name: Mr Philip Ball

Relevant professional qualification or body: ACMA

Address: 2 Warden Hill, Everton, Beds, SG19 2JT.

Date: 07 June 2021.

1st Potton Scout Group					
Accounts as at 31st March 2021					
	2020/21	2019/20		2020/21	2019/20
Income			Expenditure		
Subscriptions	3,744.50	10,073.00	Capitation	4,252.50	5,073.00
Gift Aid	1,380.54	1,583.90	Section Expenses	794.00	2,780.00
Donations	4,100.00	2,400.00	Premises - Services	2,373.10	3,597.87
Grants	20,240.93	0.00	Premises - Other	1,691.23	1,285.35
Activities	(897.00)	5,597.84	Activities	483.00	7,588.54
Fund Raising	0.00	1,958.97	New equipment	45.00	1,151.25
Hut Hire	175.00	1,780.87	Scout Hut		
			Improvements	4,743.46	484.10
Bank Interest	123.48	188.61	Administration	54.35	108.20
Miscellaneous	0.00	0.50	Miscellaneous	114.30	893.79
Excess of Expenditure over Income	0.00	0.00	Excess of Income over Expenditure	14,316.51	621.59
	28,867.45	23,583.69		28,867.45	23,583.69
Bank Reconciliation	01/04/2020	01/04/2020			
Current Account	35,051.97	21,013.73			
Virgin Deposit Account	25,342.37	25,218.89			
Petty Cash	345.23	190.44			
Profit for year	(14,316.51)				
	46,423.06	46,423.06			

Kate Gathard

Treasurer

Quartermaster's report

Following on from last year's report I can say is that the sign and gates have now been painted and Maggie has organised someone who's offered to cast the base for the gas cage.

Maggie along with various helpers and contractors have done a truly stunning job around the HQ, the landscaping overlooking the field will be a very useful addition once the grass has grown.

We've installed sanitising stations around the HQ, I can honestly say if nothing else I've learnt a great deal about what's allowed to be used within a wooden structure that isn't permanently occupied.

Who would have though that alcohol based gels can effect insurance on a building hence the use of non flammable sanitiser.

We'd hoped to give the kit some use in anger at some point but this has not been possible so I've nothing to report on that. We've introduced a shared group calendar that can be accessed by the leaders to enable the booking out of kit, it's still in the early stages and as we're not using kit at the moment it's not had any use.

Hopefully as things ease we can look towards camps away again, something we all miss.

Carl