



**Girlguiding**  
**Sussex Central county**

**CHARITY NUMBER 283700**

**ANNUAL REPORT JANUARY TO DECEMBER 2024**

Once again it has been a very busy year, and I am delighted to be leading such a thriving county with 2250 girls and 700 volunteers. Our biggest challenge is still volunteers to run units.

In February we held an all sections Thinking Day activity afternoon at Tanbridge House School. We had 800 girls and volunteers together, which I must say, when the numbers rose to this level I was glad we had kept it simple! There was an African interactive story teller, dance and a craft to make sunset lanterns. We concluded the afternoon with renewing our promises and turning the lights off to sing this little guiding light with our sunset lanterns lit up, such a special moment. During this event we said thank you to Judy Fuller our outgoing President and welcomed Clare Brittain as our President for the next 5 years.

To celebrate International Women's Day, once again in collaboration with Brighton & Hove Albion Women's football team we attended their match at their home ground in Crawley against Manchester City.

Sadly in March one of our volunteers, Pam Brakes, passed away. Pam was our county "go to" person for many things including the GO database, ensuring mandatory training was up-to-date and ensuring volunteers completed what is required. As well as all her county hats she was part of Horsham division as a District Commissioner and secretary to the Division Commissioner. Pam is very much missed and the love for her was shown with over 50 volunteers attending her funeral and in the middle of June, at her request we held a sausage sizzle, tribute and camp fire with singing at Nowhurst. There were over 100 volunteers past and present along with her family. The family planted a tree in her memory on Spider Site.

We are delighted that our beloved Blackland Farm is up and running again as Blackland Farm Outdoor Centre. Rachael the previous manager and her business partners from 4th Dimension, who have operated their outdoor business from Blackland Farm for many years, are now running it together. It is good to have supported them with various events during this year and will continue to do so going forward. The friends of Blackland Farm have relaunched!

It is all systems go preparing for our international scout and guide jamboree in - WSIJ2025. A launch event for leaders was held to find out more about the jamboree as due to Covid the last one was held in 2017. Young members from scouting and guiding in Sussex are signing up along with internationals.

We were fortunate to receive a grant from Girlguiding for adventures and have put this to great use. We held an activity day for Brownies and one for Guides with nearly 300 girls taking part at Blackland Farm. This enabled us to subsidise the event by half the cost, and of course there was a special event badge designed that everyone received. We have also used this money to take 20 older guides, aged 13/14 to a challenge weekend again at Blackland Farm. The girls came from across the county and undertook various team building challenges as well as making new friends. The balance of the funding was put towards the Brownie and Guide canoe regattas on beautiful sunny days at Southwater Country Park in June. Around 200 Brownies and Guides enjoyed taking part and had so much fun. It was great to see some new units taking part from across the county.

Many sleepovers, holidays and camps took place over the year with lots of adventures. Some leaders worked towards their Going Away With licence and were assessed for these on their residentials.

Recognising and rewarding our volunteers is very important to us. Our annual Young Person and Volunteers Awards evening was held in early July with 400 people joining us at the South of England Showground in Ardingly. It was attended by the Deputy Lieutenant of West Sussex, Mayors and other dignitaries from across the county. We had a brilliant guest speaker, a female firefighter and watch manager at West Sussex Fire & Rescue Service. It was a great inspirational talk enjoyed by both young and adult members.

Our county international service project saw 12 girls and 3 leaders go to South Africa with the Coco's Foundation where they built 2 houses, visited after school and breakfast clubs and interacted with the children and other events in the community. This was our 4<sup>th</sup> service project with the Coco's Foundation.

In the Autumn as a County we led the Remembrance Service at the Cenotaph where I had the honour of laying the Girlguiding wreath. We had 35 participants from across the county, with 19 young people.

Throughout the year our Learning and Development team have been busy delivering mandatory training including First Response and Safeguarding along with other face to face training for the Leadership Development Programme.

The biggest challenge we face in our county is the lack of volunteers. Our recruitment plans in 2025 needs to include volunteers of the younger age sector. Speaking with other charities this is a shared problem.

## **Financials**

The county remains in a strong financial position and several grants have been received this year which have enabled events for young members to be put on with a heavy subsidy. Due to the Girlguiding rebranding, county have also purchased new branding sail banners for county, learning and development team and all divisions. We also purchased a portable speaker with a microphone to be used at large scale events.

The county introduced a Young Member and Volunteer support fund and put in place a policy for this. A number of grants have been awarded to assist with financial difficulties of young members.

Return on investments has been higher than previous years due to the current economy.

## **Plans for 2025**

We will be reviewing our county plan and risk assessment and also looking at a strategy for recruitment of volunteers.

The Awards Committee will be reviewing our reward and recognition policy, in particular for the young members.

It has been a very busy year, and as County Commissioner I am now almost half way through my 5 year term of office, and have very much enjoyed getting out and about and seeing the girls having fun and adventures. I am most grateful to all our volunteers across the county for all they do to ensure we can through fun, friendship, challenge and adventure empower girls to find their voice, inspiring them to discover the best in themselves and to make a positive difference in their community.

Wendy Colson

County Commissioner Sussex Central

December 2024





**GIRL GUIDING SUSSEX CENTRAL**  
**BALANCE SHEET AS AT 31 DECEMBER 2024**

	2024 £	2023 £	
Investments at cost CCLA 1	2,947	2,947	Note 1
Investments COIF fund	1,777	1,777	Note 2
Bank Balances:			
Natwest Business Reserve	80,474	25,967	
National Savings & Investments		49,485	
Total cash	80,474	75,452	
Sundry debtors			
Stock of badges	2,099	2,393	
	2,099	2,393	
Sundry creditors	(8,728)	(7,440)	
Net assets / (liabilities)	(6,629)	(5,047)	
TOTAL NET ASSETS	78,568	75,128	
REPRESENTED BY:			
General fund balance as at 1 January	72,137	69,929	
Surplus / (deficit) for the year	3,460	2,208	
Balance as at 31 December	75,597	72,137	
Special funds	2,971	2,991	
	78,568	75,128	

Note 1: Investment

Cost	£
1412.59 Shares in Charities Official Investment Fund	2,947.00

Market value as at 31st December 2024 £28,666.11 (2023:£28032.85)

Note 2: Investment

Guide Association Trust Corporation:

5,008.37 shares in Charities Official Investment Fund. Market value as at 31st December 2024 was £101,636.35 (2023: £90,898.41)

Prepared by  Date 10-2-2025

Checked by  F.C.A. Date 4/1/25

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