

Four Marks and Ropley Scout Group

Executive Committee Chairman's Report: 2024 – 2025

During 2024-2025, Four Marks and Ropley Scout Group has continued to offer quality Scouting within the village and surrounding area. A Big Thanks and recognition of the dedication from our section leaders and supporters who continue to enable this to happen.

Overall, our sections are running at capacity and continue to have growing waiting lists.

Beavers: 22

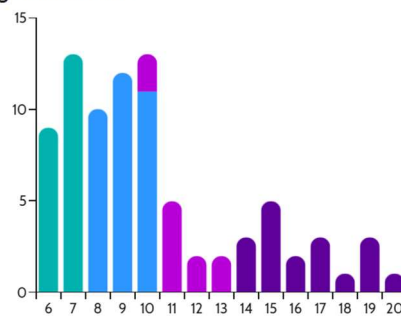
Cubs: 33

Scouts: 11

Explorers/Network: 18

Total: 84

Age Distribution



Our ability to sustain the group for the longer term, however, continues to be challenged as we still need additional adult support to be as effective and to open additional sections to tackle waiting lists. We are under growing pressure from within the Scout Association to extend group by opening a Squirrels section (4-6yrs). (<https://www.scouts.org.uk/squirrels/>) but currently don't have the capacity without additional parental support or new leaders stepping forward to do this.

There is good news that renewal of the Scout Hut lease has finally been completed (Until April 2043). My thanks to the efforts to members from the Parish Council for resolving the issue with Fields and Trust to enable this to be finally completed.

We have rebuilt a strong relationship with the new Parish Council and have happily supported a number of village events organised during the year including the 2024 Village Picnic, Fire Works, Car Parking for the Alton Model Railway Show (Febex) and the Classic Car Show at the recreation ground. It was great to see a fantastic turn out from members of the scout group and the leaders and supported who helped provide the refreshments. We are also involved in the planning for this year's village picnic in June.

Our existing Scout hut may not be a particularly attractive venue from the outside but it will remain our home for some time to come. Having had confirmation of lease renewal and security in our current building plus continued commitment and support of our scouting involvement in the growing community from the parish council we have invested time and costs in a number of significant improvement scout hut projects to make to modernise and make it more usable, including:

- Installation of three air sourced heat pumps installed by James Cole and his team at Cold Control. They should provide a significant cost saving on electricity and can be used for heating or cooling.

- Installation of a new Kitchen which should be completed by the end of May. A big thanks to Jenny and John Littlefield who donated it and also to Andy Walters to helped to fit plus the team of core people who helped to with the wiring, plumbing and painting.
- Completion of the Re-wiring and automation so that lights and heating can automatically be turned off at night.

We have two other projects on the radar re varnish the hall floor and also fitting new windows.

We will obviously continue to work closely with the Parish Council on its plans within the community to provide more facilities; There are ongoing discussions regarding the use of the scout hut as an interim meeting place for clubs and activities whilst the Benions Sports Pavilion extension project is undertaken.

During the year we have been lucky to received grants from the Four Marks Village news towards a new group mess tent, the Four Marks Beer Festival and from district grants which we have used towards new light weight teenage, additional cooking equipment and building improvements.

The group has had a number of key fund raising during the year including supporting the School organised Fireworks, run in November. The SAS (Scout Active Support) team co-ordinated an extended team that provided the catering for the event which was for held at the Recreation Ground and also the catering for the Four Marks Beer Festival. Thanks to Teresa Hammond and the team for their continued support.

The Other key fund-raising event is the District organised but Nationally run Monopoly Run. Over 8000 Scouts and Guides take part in the annual activity that runs during March. The groups support as part of the core organising committee generated significant revenue for the group covering nearly all the cost of the new heating. Thanks to Harry Davies, one of our Explorer scouts, who has joined the core Monopoly team for his support in enabling this benefit to the group.

Much of the new equipment being used for the first time at the group camp last summer at Garners Field near Farnham. Thanks to Neil Vine for his organisation and to all the leaders and helpers who helped to make the event a great success with many great activities on the programme including. Kayaking, Tomahawk throwing, Air Rifle Shooting, Archery, a mini Hike, Pioneering and the traditional Campfire.

Rotherfield District ceased to exist, after 30 years, in March and we have now become part of 'Oakhanger and District which is the merger of the old Rotherfield and Petersfield Districts. It's a new opportunity for scouting locally and also comes at a time of structural changes within the scouting movement and a new adult membership system to support training especially tracking safety and safeguarding requirements.

As with many other charity organisations the group continues to struggle to keep its head above water with increased operational costs. Most of our regular financial commitments cannot be avoided including insurances and utilities etc and with limited income from member subscriptions balancing the books remains difficult. Ultimately the aim of the group trustee board is to ensure continued opportunity for scouting growth and to ensure the future of the scout group which has actively supported the development of young people in our community since 1952.

Our ability to benefit from the Gift Aid scheme will only be proportionately beneficial. We have obtained annual payments from the Inland Revenue since the scheme began enabling us to reclaim the income tax parents have paid on their subscriptions and it should hopefully remain a significant source of income for the group going forward. We ask that all parents review and sign up to support the group via Gift Aid where they are able.

Our group's termly subs remain under pressure from cost and inflationary pressures but despite increases in National and County capitation and based this year based on current financial projections we plan to leave unchanged.

Capitation (payments to District, County and National Scout Association) and insurance remain our largest expenditure but the costs of infrastructure Services is also increasing at a steady rate.

Did you know you can support Four Marks Scout Group by raising money every time you shop online, and it doesn't cost you or us a penny. We're using easy fundraising which works with over 7,400 online brands, everyone from supermarkets, eBay, Sports Direct, Groupon, The Range, Screwfix, M&S, John Lewis, Booking.com, and everything in between.

If interested, you can register here: <http://efraising.org/SaxG3YYyeH> it only takes 2 minutes and all you need is your email address.

We also continue to provide help to a small number of members from low income families through reduced subs and help with uniform and camps, as Scouting should be open to all, regardless of personal circumstances.

I like to thank Richard Coleman has taken over from Kirsty Harding as Treasurer and that after 4 plus months we believe we have finally overcome the challenges getting the banking mandates changed enabling him to become operational in the role - welcome him to the team! Also, thanks to Allan Coombs for auditing our annual accounts.

I'd like pass the groups thanks and condolences to Jenny and the Family of Chris Lake who passed in March. He served the scout group for over 30 years, much of this time as chairman. Both Chris and Jenny have had significant roles in supporting scouting from running the infamous 50/50 auctions, organising the scout Christmas post and supporting the Gangshows. It was great to see so many scout leaders and supporters, past and present, who attended his cremation service and for those who provided refreshments afterwards at the village hall.

I would finally like to thank all our leaders, Scout Active Support, and committee members for their efforts throughout what's been another very difficult and challenging year, and for their continuing commitment to 'doing their best' for all the young people in the Four Marks and Ropley Scout Group.

If anyone is willing to help in a supporting ('non-uniformed') or a uniformed capacity, please don't hesitate to contact me.

Mark Hughes

Chairman



<http://www.fourmarksscouts.org.uk/>

Chair@fourmarksscouts.org.uk

May 2025



Four Marks & Ropley Scout Group

Registered Charity No 302240

ANNUAL ACCOUNTS FOR YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2024

OPERATING ACCOUNT

2023	INCOME	2024
TOTAL		TOTAL
£10,498.44	Subscriptions	£10,489.00
£3,407.00	Camps and activities	£4,770.80
£578.98	Uniform sales	£294.00
£14,484.42		£15,553.80
£3,720.99	Fund raising	£4,959.08
£100.00	Donations	£15,502.00
£0.00	Hut Hire	£0.00
£0.00	Minibus Hire	£200.00
£0.00	HMRC Gift Aid	£3,406.79
£2,008.22	Interest	£2,636.93
£20.44	Other: Floats/Transfer/Admin	£32.00
£170.33	Restricted Funds - activities	£245.00
£1,000.00	Restricted Funds - hut	£0.00
£21,504.40		£42,535.60
-	Transfer from/to Newbury BS	£5,000.00
	Transfer from/to Petty Cash	£1.55
£21,504.40		£47,537.15

2023	EXPENDITURE	2024
£4,032.00	District & National levy	£4,400.00
£426.00	Go Cardless Fees (within income in 2022)	£514.25
£96.00	Admin and floats	£1,122.68
£3,380.51	Camps and activities	£6,564.34
£852.69	Uniform and badges	£1,016.79
£3,976.25	Hut running costs	£1,914.79
	Hut maintenance	£4,414.39
£1,979.73	Hut & personal insurance	£1,151.18
£279.76	Restricted Funds - activities	£41.95
£1,000.00	Restricted Funds - hut	£0.00
£16,022.94		£21,140.37
£1,586.26	Minibus costs	£3,401.37
£0.00	Fund raising costs	£5,020.60
£624.00	Other (lease advice)	£1,701.50
£0.00	Transfer to Newbury BS	£5,000.00
£18,233.20		£36,263.84

£3,271.20	OPERATING SURPLUS / (DEFICIT)	£11,273.31
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OVERALL FINANCIAL POSITION

£5,869.67	Current Account (Barclays Bank) Balance	£9,504.50
£0.00	Petty Cash	£1.55
£75,160.03	Hut Account (Newbury Building Society) Balance	£82,769.85
£829.97	Minibus Account (Newbury Building Society) Bala	£857.08
£81,859.67		£93,132.98

Represented by:

Balance b/fwd from 2023	£81,859.67
2024 Operating surplus/deficit	£11,273.31
Balance c/fwd end 2024	£93,132.98