



# Winchester District Scout Council

## Annual Report of the Trustees for the period 1<sup>st</sup> January 2024 to 31<sup>st</sup> December 2024

### SECTION A: Reference and administration details

The Winchester District Scout Council (WDSC), to which this report is addressed, is the charity that supports the operation of the Winchester District of The Scout Association (TSA) ('the District').

Charity No. 302317 Scout Association Registration No. 12033

The charity's principal address is Pinsent Campsite, Clarendon Way, Winchester SO22 5QL

Names of the Trustees<sup>1</sup>:

| Name               | Route to membership (and related roles)  | Dates as trustee                                      |
|--------------------|--|---|
| Richard Mendelsohn | Appointed as District Chair by the AGM 2023 and 2024   | 1 <sup>st</sup> Jan 2024 to 31 <sup>st</sup> Dec 2024 |
| James Fraser       | Appointed as District Treasurer by the AGM 2023 and 2024                                     | 1 <sup>st</sup> Jan 2024 to 31 <sup>st</sup> Dec 2024 |
| Robin Cook         | Ex-Officio (District Commissioner)   | 1 <sup>st</sup> Jan 2024 to 31 <sup>st</sup> Dec 2024 |
| Bruce Martin       | Formerly ex-officio as District Explorer Scout Commissioner<br>Now appointed by the AGM 2024 | 1 <sup>st</sup> Jan 2024 to 31 <sup>st</sup> Dec 2024 |
| David Ashby        | Formerly ex-officio as District Scout Network Commissioner<br>Now appointed by the AGM 2024  | 1 <sup>st</sup> Jan 2024 to 31 <sup>st</sup> Dec 2024 |
| Kama Miller-Gambie | Ex-Officio (District Youth Commissioner)   | 1 <sup>st</sup> Jan 2024 to 31 <sup>st</sup> Dec 2024 |
| Oscar Lodge        | Appointed by the AGM 2023 and 2024   | 1 <sup>st</sup> Jan 2024 to 31 <sup>st</sup> Dec 2024 |
| Chris Welland      | Appointed by the AGM 2023 and 2024   | 1 <sup>st</sup> Jan 2024 to 31 <sup>st</sup> Dec 2024 |
| Dawn Inglis        | Appointed by the AGM 2023 and 2024   | 1 <sup>st</sup> Jan 2024 to 31 <sup>st</sup> Dec 2024 |
| Ian Johnson        | Appointed by the AGM 2023 and 2024   | 1 <sup>st</sup> Jan 2024 to 31 <sup>st</sup> Dec 2024 |
| Chris Floyd        | Appointed by the AGM 2023 and 2024   | 5 <sup>th</sup> Jun 2024 to 31 <sup>st</sup> Dec 2024 |
| Nick Safford       | Appointed by the AGM 2023 and 2024   | 1 <sup>st</sup> Jan 2024 to 31 <sup>st</sup> Dec 2024 |
| Andy Roberts       | Appointed by the AGM 2023.   | 1 <sup>st</sup> Jan 2024 to 20 <sup>th</sup> Feb 2024 |

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<sup>1</sup> All members of the District Executive Committee are trustees, and all trustees were members of the District Executive Committee as then was.

The following roles Executive Committee / Trustee roles are vacant as of 31<sup>st</sup> Dec 2024:

| Role |
|------|
| None |

The following persons had a right of attendance at trustees' meetings:

|              |                                 |   |
|--------------|---------------------------------|---|
| Paul Bell    | County Commissioner (Hampshire) | 1 <sup>st</sup> Jan 2024 to 31 <sup>st</sup> Dec 2024 |
| Sarah Thomas | County Chair (Hampshire)        | 1 <sup>st</sup> Jan 2024 to 31 <sup>st</sup> Dec 2024 |

The District had no advisers in terms of the administration of the charity.

## SECTION B: Structure, governance and management

As at 31<sup>st</sup> December 2024 the District consisted of:

- a) Thirteen Scout Groups (one of which was dormant throughout the year);
- b) Seven Explorer Units; and
- c) One Scout Network Unit.

The District's governing documents are those of The Scout Association. They consist of a Royal Charter, which in turn gives authority to the Bye Laws of the Association and The Policy, Organisation and Rules of The Scout Association (TSA).

The District is created and operated as an educational charity under the rules of TSA. It is an autonomous organisation holding its property and equipment and admitting people to membership of the Scout District subject to the policy and rules of The Scout Association. The District operates in accordance with the constitution provided at Rule 5c.2 of the Policy, Organisation and Rules of TSA.

The District Trustee Board is responsible for the governance of the charity. Although the District Trustee Board is responsible for the charity, it is accountable to the District Scout Council.

The District was led during the period by the District Commissioner and managed by the Trustee Board and the Leadership Team. They were accountable to the District Scout Council for the satisfactory running of the District.

The Trustee Board consists of a Chair, Treasurer and ten trustees which include two ex-officio trustees. The trustee board meets every four months. Members of the trustee board complete:

- Safety and Safeguarding training within the first 30 days;
- A criminal record check, initiated within the first 30 days;
- An internal check;
- A trustee eligibility check;
- The Declarations including the Trustee Declarations within the first six weeks;

- Within their first six months of joining the board, if not already completed, training on:
  - Data protection in Scouts;
  - Who we are and what we do;
  - Creating inclusion
  - Being a Scouts Trustee

The District Trustee Board is a team of volunteers who work together, as charity Trustees, to make sure Scouts is run safely and legally. At the heart of their role is a focus on strategy, performance and assurance, working to ensure that the District is meeting The Scout Association's overall aims and strategic goals.

Effective Trustee support helps other volunteers run the Scout programme that gives young people skills for life.

## **Risk and Internal Controls**

The Winchester District Trustee Board has identified the major risks to which they believe the District is exposed, and which are recorded in the District Risk Register. These have been reviewed and systems have been established to mitigate them. The main areas of concern identified are:

**Injury to leaders, helpers, supporters and members:** The District, through the membership fees, contributes to the Scout Association's national accident insurance policy. In addition, a review has been undertaken to ensure that all adults supporting the District are covered by this or alternative insurance. Risk Assessments are undertaken and appropriate risk reduction measures are put in place before all activities take place in accordance with TSA Policy, Organisation and Rules.

### **Damage to buildings, property and equipment:**

- a) The District has its own property, buildings and equipment at its Pinsent Campsite and Activities Centre. Sufficient insurance is maintained through TSA insurance and other commercially sourced insurance to address all third- party responsibilities and continuation of service provision in the event of damage;
- b) From time to time the District hires or borrows other buildings and equipment on a commercial or charitable basis. In such transactions, the District ensures that a sufficient level of insurance is in place against damage or loss on a case by case basis.

**Reduction or loss of youth members:** The District and Groups provide activities for all young people aged between 4 to 24. If there was a significant reduction in membership in a section of a particular Group then there would have to be a contraction, consolidation or closure of that section. In a worst-case scenario the complete closure of a Group might be necessary. This reduces the District's, and its

Group's, ability to fulfil its aims that every young person in the area who wishes to take part in its activities is able to do so and that those activities will be wide ranging and of a high standard and educational value as expected by TSA. This risk is addressed through seeking to provide a wide-ranging programme of activities of a high standard and educational value in all sections;

**Reduction or loss of leaders:** The District relies totally upon volunteers<sup>2</sup> to run and administer the activities in the District. If there was a reduction in the number of leaders to an unacceptable level in a particular section or a Group as a whole, then there would have to be a contraction, consolidation or closure of a section. In the worst-case scenario, the complete closure of the District. This negates District, and its Groups, ability to fulfil its aims as above. This risk is addressed through seeking to maintain sufficient adult support for every section through continuous attention to recruitment, with Groups assisted by a District Growth and Development Team.

**Reduced income from fundraising:** The District relies primarily upon income from membership subscriptions and fundraising. The District holds reserves to ensure the continuity of activities should there be a major reduction in income. The Trustee Board could raise the value of its membership subscriptions so as to increase the income to the District on an ongoing basis, either temporarily or permanently.

**Improper or uncontrolled expenditure:** The District continually monitors its expenditures against its annual budget. Financial controls are in place which are designed to protect against unauthorised expenditure by any individuals who undertake scouting or other related activities on behalf of the District which necessarily incur costs. The District also has in place a system of internal controls which are designed to provide reasonable assurance against material mismanagement or loss, which include two signatories for all payments, and comprehensive insurance policies to ensure that insurable risks are covered.

## **SECTION C: Objectives and activities**

The objectives of the District are as a unit of the Scout Association. Scouting exists to actively engage and support young people in their personal development, empowering them to make a positive contribution to society. Scouting takes place when young people, in partnership with adults, work together based on the values of Scouting and:

- enjoy what they are doing and have fun,
- take part in activities indoors and outdoors,
- learn by doing,

- share in spiritual reflection,
- take responsibility and make choices,
- undertake new and challenging activities,
- make and live by their Promise.

In addition, the District aims that every young person in the area who wishes to take part in its activities should be able to do so, and that those activities will be wide ranging and of a high standard and educational value as expected by TSA.

The District maintains three charitable funds to support those people who would otherwise be unable to participate in normal scouting activities enjoyed by the majority of members: -

1. The RBR Fund for young people in Winchester District who are members of the Scout Association, who want to take part in activities which are appropriate to them but who, through financial circumstances, find themselves unable to take part. It also supports those who need financial assistance to become or to remain members of a Section within the District. Access to the fund is not available to Leaders or other adult supporters.
2. The Mike Green Fund for supporting people in training to run adventurous activities but who, through financial circumstances, find themselves unable to partake of appropriate training.
3. The International Fund for assisting young people in Scouting to attend international Scouting events.

The District meets the Charity Commission's public benefit criteria under both the advancement of education and the advancement of citizenship or community development headings.

## **SECTION D: Achievements, performance and objectives**

Scouting in Winchester continues to thrive and the challenge remains to meet the demand from young people wanting to become Scouts and to increase that demand by providing better activities.

Overall the year in 2024:

- Saw many activities undertaken and Group and District level throughout the year;
- .In October the Candover Valley Group transferred from Rotherfield to Winchester (The Alresford and Cheriton and YAKS Explorer Scouts followed in January 2025).

At 1432 young members, the January 2025 census was a slight-improvement (1.6% rise) over the January 2024 census of 1409.

Unfortunately, the District Development Officer resigned during the year. Steps are now in place to recruit a replacement. The Joining List remains high. This represents an unsatisfied demand and is unsatisfactory because those young people on the Joining List will only be young people for a limited time and are missing out. The aim is for a zero Joining List while stimulating more young people to want to join through a wide range of high-quality activities and publicity that encourages others to take part. The key to satisfying the demand and improving activities is to recruit more adults. This has exceeded expectations this year.

In accord with national needs, good progress has been made on the validation of leader competence against the required training modules although the bringing forward of dates for the revalidation of safety and safeguarding is causing some problems. The late completion of induction activities has been addressed but still needs more effort to make late completion a historical issue. Imposing restrictions on attending nights away activities when induction has not been completed on time has proved effective with several completions in the week before a camp.

The Scout Antler Incident Hike Competition and Autumn Walking Expedition to the Brecon Beacons took place.

Explorers were also active. Silver and Gold Duke of Edinburgh expeditions and several joined the Scouts in a joint expedition to the Brecon Beacons. The much-needed new unit, Titan, is now flourishing.

Of the thirteen Groups, all but one had Group Lead Volunteers (GLVs) at the end of 2024. The 4<sup>th</sup> remained dormant despite attempts to revive it, closure is now being sought.

Scouting relies on adult volunteers (we have 499 adult volunteers, slightly down on the 507 from last year and 518 the year before. It is considered that a replacement DDO will greatly assist in reversing this trend and making space for more young people.

## **SECTION E: Financial review**

2024 was a good year, the Barn project was completed on budget at £152k. It is the policy of the district to maximise its cash reserves for the benefit of the Young people within the district. As a result of moving funds into interest bearing accounts £4k was earned against £1k the previous year. The funds are diversified amongst a number of Notice interest bearing accounts. It is the intention to transfer the balance of the reserves into a no notice interest bearing account whilst

maintaining the current account.

The District reserves that are not currently allocated to sub accounts stand at £35k which represents 2.5 times district general expenditure. This figure is within our parameter of no more than 3x.

Gift aid has increased in line with increased subs from explorers. The large donation was mostly the gift from Colin Brooks for the climbing wall.

Candover Valley have transferred to Winchester District and a £1k balance has been transferred with them.

Overall the district spent £51k more than income. This was accounted for by the substantial expenditure on the Barn project. If the extraordinary items, Barn and donations are stripped from the accounts then there is a £12k excess of income over expenditure.

Youth programmes and activities are showing a healthy increase in expenditure representing more activity. The other expenditure is mostly monies that have come into the district that has been transferred to groups, i.e payroll giving.

## **SECTION F: Plans for future period**

Our overall plans and priorities set out in our previous report continued unchanged at the start of 2024. Emphasis remains what we had set out in order to grow the District:

- a) Active recruitment of Squirrel and Beaver Scouts and parents;
- b) Further improving the welcome for new adults; and
- c) Continuing engaging and stimulating programmes.

A new emphasis has been injected into the new building at Pinsent although this is still discussion with the architect engaged.

Emphasis continues to be placed on maintaining and developing the close relationships with our local communities and with City and Hampshire Councillors and Council Officers. The need for new Scout buildings and land swaps continues to be urgent. These, as ever, will only be achieved with local community and local authority support. The key to funding new building construction remains to be achieved with community use by day - most likely by the very young or elderly.

Scouting in Winchester continues to embrace TSA's Strategy for 2018-23 with its continued focus on the following four objectives:

- Growth – Scouting changes lives. Youngsters who want a place should have one.
- Inclusivity – we are working to ensure more girls and more additional needs.

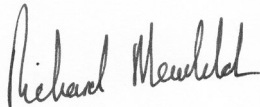

- Youth shaped – young people should be able to shape their Scouting experience.
- Community impact – Scouting makes a difference not just to the individual but also to wider society and we want to increase that positive impact.

Preparations are also underway to restart fund raising to complete the construction of the new Campsite Facility building which has been held up now for several years.

## SECTION G: Declaration

The Trustees declare that they have approved the trustees' report above.

Signed on behalf of the charity's trustees: -

|                    |  |   |
|--------------------|--|---|
| Signature and date | <br>9 <sup>th</sup> June 2025 | <br>9 <sup>th</sup> June 2025 |
| Names              | Richard Mendelsohn   | Robin Cook  |
| Positions          | Chair  | District Lead Volunteer   |