

Hitchin District Scouts

Annual Review to 5th May 2025

Hitchin District Scout Council

President & Vice Presidents

President	Graham Woolley
Vice Presidents	Rose De Roeck
	Tony Freeman
	Bernard Higgs
	Keith McEwen

District Board of Trustees

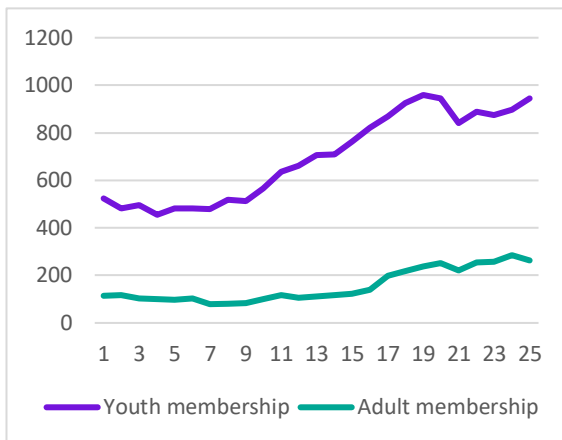
Chairman	Mike Wells
Secretary	Colin Wilson
Treasurer	Craig Wilson
District Lead Volunteer	Henry Harrison
District Youth Lead	Max Pearson
Trustees	Denise Wells
	Geraint Edwards
	Tony Hankin
	Tracey Higginbotham
	Kevin Hankin

District Membership

Squirrels	13
Beavers	254
Cubs	284
Scouts	294
Explorers	85
Network	15
Total Young People	945
Total Adults	264
Total Membership	1209







This year our youth membership increased by roughly 5%. This rise was only seen in the Scout section with drops in other

sections. The adult numbers also saw a drop in the number reported. While this may seem worrying, I am confident that the change in adult numbers is due to clean up efforts migrating to the new system. We actually saw a rise in ‘leaders’ and ‘managers’. The drop was only in ‘support’ roles and I believe that many of the roles closed weren’t active volunteers. The youth membership drop in lower sections is likely caused by the increase in membership fee. I believe that this will be corrected next year.



Groups and Units in Hitchin District

Scout Groups

-  1st Hitchin (Boys' School)
-  2nd Hitchin (Air Scouts)
-  3rd Hitchin (Walsworth Road Baptist Church)
-  4th Hitchin (St. Ippolytts)
-  5th Hitchin (St. Mark's)
-  6th Hitchin (Priory)
-  7th Hitchin (Our Lady's)
-  8th Hitchin (Oughton)
-  9th Hitchin (1st Ickleford)
-  11th Hitchin (Christchurch)
-  12th Hitchin (St. Mary's and Holy Saviour)
-  15th Hitchin (Holwell and Pirton)
-  16th Hitchin (St. Faiths)
-  17th Hitchin (St. Michael's)

Explorer Scout Units

- 1st Hitchin ESU
- BEAR ESU
- DORA ESU
- HYDRUS Young Leaders

Network Scout Unit

- Hitchin District Network



District Awards and Achievements

Chief Scouts Award for Merit

Aida Wolley
Ashley Theakstone
Karen Theakstone
Gemma Pearson
Sandra Stokes
Spencer Polley
Tina Hay

Chief Scouts Commendation for Good Service

Chris Blade
Craig Wilson
Ian Young
Michael Hamid

60 Years' Service

Jeff Phillips

25 Years' Service

Ian White

5 years' service

Alex Booth
Carl Watson
Judith Devey
Leah Davis
Lucie Goldsmith
Mark Nicholls
Matt Whiting
Odile Barclay
Peter Alsop
Philip Morrow

40 Years' Service

Denise Wells

15 Years' Service

Janette Innes

30 Years' Service

Graham Woolley

10 Years' Service

Rachel Drury
Sophie Rutschmann

*due to the new membership system, there has been a delay in receiving awards. Please bear with me if you see your name above but haven't yet been presented with a certificate.

District Chairman

Hello again and thank you for reading the annual review of Hitchin Scouting. I think I have now recovered from #DAW25 I can not remember if this was my fourth or fifth away weekend. I would especially like to thank Ian and his whole team for making this event a great success. For my part those of you that did not see me, I spent almost all my time in the kitchen of the main building Trying to keep your leadership team loaded up with coffee and carbs.

During this year, Hitchin Scouting was represented again at the 2nd Tilehouse Rotary Youth activities showcase event in the Market Place. I am very pleased to say that we were again successful in recruiting a number of new adult volunteers. It is very difficult to say no to Tina (Thankfully). I hope that we will repeat this again in September.

As always, I would sincerely like to thank all of the leaders and adult volunteers who have helped to deliver these "Skills for life", we simply could not do it without you. I look forward to welcoming you to our AGM at the Cricket club on 5th May.

Mike Wells
District Chairman



District Treasurer

The Financial Accounts for the calendar year 2024 are presented for consideration at this AGM. The accounts have been independently examined, and I would like to thank Philippa Morgan-Males for carrying out the examination. Both the accounts and the examiner's report were approved by the District Trustee Board at a meeting on 23rd April 2025.

As mentioned in last year's report, the District opened a 30-day notice savings account with Dudley Building Society to hold surplus funds. £40,000 was initially invested in this account at 4.1% interest per annum. The interest rate on the account has since reduced to 3.25%, but this remains competitive and there are no plans to seek alternatives. £10,000 was withdrawn from the account in early 2025 to subsidize the DAW 2025 event, and this will be reflected in the 2025 accounts.

Scout Association membership fees for 2024 increased by £2, and the County levy increased by 50p. However, Hitchin District subsidized the District levy by £2.50 which meant that the 2024 capitation fees for Hitchin Groups were the same as 2023, at £55 per head. The subsidy was funded from existing grants. Subscription costs charged by group to members increased from an average of £34 per term in 2023 to £35 per term in 2024.

Scout Shop income in 2024 was £12,900 in sales (2023: £13,750) and £9,600 in expenditure (2023: £11,400). All profits from the shop are re-invested into Hitchin Scouts. Thank you to Denise and the team for all their work.

Gift Aid in the amount of £1,490 was claimed in 2024.

Income generated from Scout HQ building increased by £400 in 2024 thanks to the building being made available as a polling station for local and national elections. Expenditure on DHQ, including insurance and facilities also increased compared to 2023 by £2,700.

Installations of new lighting with emergency backup, new heaters, and purchase and installation of a publicly available defibrillator account for the increase. These were all funded from existing grants.

Both income and expenditure in the Explorer units almost doubled compared to 2023, this was due to the running of several large events throughout the year, including multiple camps and Duke of Edinburgh expeditions. Additionally in 2024, income and expenditure for the Explorers trip to Yellowstone National Park has been recorded. This trip will take place later this year.

The District Trustees, together with Explorer leaders decided that Explorer subscriptions would increase from £30 to £33 per term beginning in the Spring Term of 2025. This is the first such increase for many years and was made in anticipation of substantially higher capitation fees in 2025 and increases in consumer prices.

Receipts were £77,568 in 2024 compared with £118,915 in 2023. The 2023 figures were higher because of grants received in that financial year.

Expenditure in 2024 was £80,285 compared to £130,446 in 2023. The significantly higher expenditure in 2023 was for the Lochearnhead trip.

Overall, at the end of 2024, District funds stood at £79,733 compared to £82,450, in 2023. The reduction is explained by the expenditure of grant funds as highlighted above.

Craig Wilson
District Treasurer

District Lead Volunteer

This year has been dominated for many in the district with the new membership system and changes to training and roles. A huge thank you for continuing to bear with the new system and its technical quirks. It hasn't been easy but hopefully we are starting to come out the other side. While the system itself is hugely flawed, some of the changes that went alongside it do make life easier for everybody. For example, anybody can now nominate a volunteer for an award easily, anybody can put in an application for a permit and online training doesn't need to be signed off manually.

It was great this year to appoint Max as the District Youth Lead. Max has already started to plan what he wants to achieve in the role and reach out to other members of the district. Thank you again to Tom for all his time and energy in the role previously.

This year, the district opened two new sections, significantly expanding our reach within the community. 16th Hitchin reopened its Scout troop, with Ross and Phil taking the lead at Highover School, offering vital opportunities for older youth to develop crucial life skills. Also, 15th Hitchin launched our second Squirrel Drey in the district. The Scout Association has set fairly challenging, yet vital, targets for counties like ours to open more Squirrel Dreys. This strategic push is driven by the clear benefits seen by communities where we establish new provision for these youngest members.

Squirrel Dreys, catering to 4 and 5 year olds, set the foundations for a lifelong love of adventure and learning. These early experiences not only lay the groundwork for their progression through Beavers, Cubs, and Scouts, but also contribute to a stronger, more engaged community as these children grow into responsible citizens. Therefore, it's truly fantastic to have a second drey in Hitchin, and we will be actively looking for further opportunities to open more provision, ensuring that even more young people in our district can benefit from the unique and enriching experiences that Scouting offers right from the very start.

A huge thank you to the district team for everything this year. A special thanks to Ian for a fantastic DAW- his first in the activity lead role!

Next year we will be starting to plan for Lochearnhead in August 2027 and in the coming months, will be selecting young people to attend the Poland Jamboree in 2027.

Henry Harrison
District Lead



District Youth Lead

Firstly, a brief introduction to those who don't know me yet as I'm still relatively fresh in the role. Having been in Scouts since Beavers, I've been really pleased to join the District team and start to meet all the fantastic young people and their equally fantastic volunteers. My role is about amplifying those young people's voices across Scouting, whether it be through the YouShape Award, youth forums or our young leader programme. I've been enjoying visiting some groups already and hearing about what makes our young people enjoy Scouting so much (and it's not just dodgeball!!)

DAW was only a few weeks ago, and I hope everyone who came along had a brilliant time. A huge thank you to Ian for his hard work in planning such a great weekend!

Having only recently started the role, hopefully you won't mind a shorter review from me. Over the coming months, I hope to visit and meet more of you at your groups so we can continue to promote and deliver youth-led Scouting.

Max Pearson
Youth Lead



District Activity Team Lead

Over the year the activity teams have been working hard to bring Skills for Life to the District.

June 2024

Beavers and Cubs participated in a day trip to the Duxford Air Museum. Early on a cold, windy morning, the coaches collected 140 Beavers and Cubs from Woodside car park. Throughout the day, we observed old planes taking off and landing and engaged in activities to earn our air badge.

Thank you to Caroline from 17th Hitchin for her hard work in arranging the trip.

July RIAT 2024 Farnborough Air Show

In July, a small group of older Scouts and Explorers attended the RIAT24 Air Show. Since it was one of the hottest days, they had a great time. Thank you, Tony, for driving and organising the minibus.

October 2024

Cubs participated in a district hike in Wymondley Wood. Approximately 70 Cubs took part, followed by a BBQ to conclude the event.

November 2024

More than 17 teams (150 participants) gathered at Boyd Field for the Scout and Explorer district night hike. This event took them across the fields of Henlow and Clifton, with nearly all participants finding their way back to Boyd Field for food and hot chocolate.

December 2024

Squirrels and Beavers Christingle service. This is the second year this event has taken place, and more Squirrels and Beavers gathered at St Mary's church than ever before. This is one of the most chaotic services around, but it works well. Approximately 160 Squirrels and Beavers participated, along with their younger and older siblings who were able to stay with their parents.

The service was led by Rev. Chris Bunce, who excelled at bringing it to life. Thanks to St. Mary's for their hospitality and assistance in making this event possible for the community.

The Priory School, Wednesday evenings

Archery:

Since last September, we have conducted 23 sessions, allowing the teams to introduce Archery to 400 Cubs and Scouts. We are pleased to welcome two new instructors to the team: Hazel White and Conor Buck. Obtaining permits from the County has been somewhat challenging. Nevertheless, with the assistance of some County team members, we hope to resolve this issue by the summer break, making life a little easier for everyone.

Climbing:

The climbing team has been busy running 26 sessions, with 468 Cubs and Scouts trying out the wall. We have a new team member joining us from Letchworth, welcome, Mark Brewis.

Over the term, we had a visit from the County Climbing Assessor, who was impressed with the setup and the passion our climbers showed. We are now working on getting some of our climbers certified on other walls.

Additionally, over time, we have had Letchworth District book the occasional Wednesday and open the activity to more young people for the first time. We organised an evening for adult leaders so they could come down and try it out, also following the Hermitage Road Day. We invited potential new leaders to come and see what it's all about.

Sailing:

The district sailing team has been offering more sailing experiences to groups booked throughout the summer months. Additionally, Andrew Henton Pusey and the sailing team have conducted a three-day sailing course, along with sailing taster days that fill up quickly. They are now preparing for the annual trip to Mersea. Thank you to all the team who keep sailing alive in Hitchin.



On Friday, 9th May 2025, all was calm at the Leslie Sell Scout Centre in Bromham. Until half of Hitchin appeared to show up.

On Saturday, the action began in Hitchin with two 100-seater coaches arriving at 7 am at The Priory School to collect the Beavers who had come for the day. Both coaches saved approximately 8500 miles of car travel and parking. This was a precision-timed event, as the coaches arrived in Bromham. Once they dismounted, the Scouts boarded to attend the Caldecott Centre, MK for their day out. For this DAW, we had to split the Scouts into two separate activity centers due to the number attending. Not long after the first two coaches arrived and departed, the second two arrived. One coach took the remaining 70 Scouts to Northampton Active, while the other coach transported the Explorers to Snowzone and the Hollywood Bowl in Milton Keynes. Thanks, Tony, for making this run as smoothly as it did.

This was the first DAW that I oversaw as part of the District team, and it represented a significant learning curve. However, the inflation that has occurred since 2022 made it all the more challenging. With many families struggling financially, facing issues with school trips and other life challenges, I aimed to keep the district's cost per person for the event as low as possible while still providing them with a memorable weekend. Through lengthy phone calls and considerable pleading, we managed to run the event. I have not yet received feedback while compiling this report, so based on what leaders and young participants shared with me, the ideas were practical and effective.

Throughout the weekend, representatives from every group in Hitchin participated, but three groups opted to send only their Beaver sections due to other camps scheduled to take place.

One minor issue was that the archery instructor scheduled for that day did not show up, so a massive thank you to Gavin and Hazel for running a day of archery for the Cubs.

Numbers

Squirrels, 14, also stayed over on Friday night, and watching them participate was great.

Beavers 190 attended; some stayed overnight on Friday evening, while the majority came for the day by coach.

Cubs 183, participate in activities all day, including shooting, climbing walls, and caving tunnels.

Scouts, 240, went off-site to two locations.

Explorers, 38

Overall, 665 young people were present on site on Saturday.

We also had visits from Alistair Strathern, MP, and Annette Payne from Hertfordshire Scouts.

Without the District team and the support they provided to me and others over the weekend, none of this would have been possible. Additionally, I would like to thank those who ran the campfires. I received excellent feedback about how much they enjoyed it, with activities divided into three campfires. The last one was particularly interesting (Gordon).

Thank you once again to everyone, from leaders to parents and the younger generation, for participating.

See you back in three years, DAW28

Ian Buck
Activities Lead

District Programme Team Lead

The Programme Team exists to help every section run a safe, enjoyable and quality programme. This is our first year of formal existence since Transformation so we are still finding our feet under the new structure and roles.

The Programme Team has co-hosted, with the activities team, termly meetings for Beaver, Cub, Scout and Explorers leaders which provide opportunities for leaders to share best practice, successful programme ideas and give feedback directly to the District Team.

Our achievements this year include:

- 8 Scouts from across the District completed their Expedition Challenge Award through the District Programme
- DofE Bronze and Silver practice and qualifying Expeditions completed under the leadership of Michael Cranfield and Ben Pearson, Hitchin's Duke of Edinburgh Team.
- 5 DofE Silver Awards and 13 DofE Bronze Awards completed during the year.
- An OSM Training workshop to help groups get the most out of the tool.
- Safety Workshops to reinforce how to run safe scouting.
- The Programme Team conducts visits to engage with leaders during their section meetings.

Ben Pearson
Programme Lead

District Volunteer Development Team Lead

The Volunteer Development Team was introduced into Scout UK and the Hitchin District structure in November 24, and its purpose was to ensure all volunteers across the District have a positive and enjoyable volunteering experience.

The system has its challenges! The new ways of working meant many of us found ourselves having to learn a new way to meet the needs of what being a scout volunteer is.

Scout UK lost many 'unused' roles/titles and we all became part of a team, and some members part of many teams!

The new ways of learning became more personal and each member has ownership of their own progression, learning and development. VDT have been able to offer both training and support, plus one-on-one sessions to ensure confidence and understanding in the changes.

It has been encouraging to see many leaders have continued with their personal learning via 'Growing Roots' which now includes the introduction of a new Safety Module to be completed by every face-to-face scouting member by 14th July 2025.

Some members are looking to complete the traditional Wood Badge that has remained as an adult award for completion of the training since 1919. It is due to be replaced and details will follow in due course. However, should anyone still wish to complete the badge of recognition we will do all we can to support this. However, should anyone still wish to complete the badge of recognition we will do all we can to support this.

Every Hitchin team continues to attend meetings, arrange camps or recruit whilst still putting the young people at the heart of what we do, so doing they can continue to create inspiring teams and build brilliant programmes.

We are delighted to have welcomed a new Scout Section into Hitchin District which continues to grow from strength-to-strength, and wonderful to see the young people learn the activities Hitchin Scouting has to offer.

I'd like to thank everybody for their ongoing persistence with the changes and VDT will do all we can to continue to support all members to be the best scout members we can to offer #SkillsForLife to every young person.

Please do contact anyone in the VDT team for support from learning, additional needs, award recognition, skill accreditations, recruitment, Welcome Chats, sharing of team member skills, mentoring etc.

Tina Hay
Volunteer Development Lead

Vacancies

We are always looking for people to join the district team and help coordinate scouting across the district. If you are interested in any position, please get in touch with somebody in the district team. In particular, we are looking for people to help in the programme team with cubs and scouts. This isn't a huge role and could be done alongside another. At its core, you would chair the termly section meetings and help mention leaders on programme planning.

We are also looking for more people to volunteer with district activities. If you are interested in helping to plan events across the district, please get in touch.

Finally, we are looking for a District Quartermaster and somebody to help with PR and social media.



Registered Charity Number 302546

Hitchin District Scout Council

Receipts and Payments Account

For the year from	01/01/2024	To	31/12/2024
----------------------	------------	----	------------

Receipts

	2024 £		2023 £
Subscriptions			
Membership subscriptions	48,620.00		47,685.00
Less: Membership subscriptions paid on	- 46,410.00		- 43,350.00
Net membership subscriptions retained	2,210.00		4,335.00
District Operations			
Premises	702.96		298.99
Administration & PR	-		-
Adult support & training	485.18		80.00
Equipment	-		-
Sub total	1,188.14		378.99
District Activities & Groups			
District events & activities	15,121.00		11,382.64
Watersports	8,374.33		6,539.29
Jamboree	-		- 7,087.50
Explorers	26,792.83		13,435.71
DAW25	350.00		
Yellowstone	7,044.54		
Lochearnhead	-		19,738.17
Sub total	57,682.70		44,008.31
Donations, legacies and similar income			
Private donations and grants	1,231.54		50,332.00
Jamboree Donations and Grants	-		369.50
Lochearnhead Donations and Grants			2,550.00
Benevity and Amazon Smile	492.50		524.52
Sub total	1,724.04		53,776.02
Charitable income to pass on			
St Georges day - MACs	-		-
Corporate matched funding passed to specific groups	60.84		-
	60.84		-
Scout Shop			
Scout Shop Sales	12,898.67		13,754.02
	12,898.67		13,754.02
Investment income			
Bank interest	313.66		157.13
Gift Aid	1,490.52		2,505.76
Sub total	1,804.18		2,662.89
Total receipts	77,568.57		118,915.23

Payments

	2024	2023
	£	£
District Operations		
Premises	5,874.18	3,188.38
Administration & PR	953.03	1,650.71
Adult support & training	3,198.14	4,229.80
Watercraft Insurance	379.44	-
Equipment	2,795.02	10,176.36
Sub total	13,199.81	19,245.25
District Activities & Groups		
District events & activities	18,377.65	13,327.71
Watersports	4,312.40	4,137.04
Jamboree 2023	-	5,749.57
Explorers	27,464.49	15,465.68
Youth Forum, Young Leaders & Network	-	75.77
DAW25	3,657.56	
Yellowstone	3,409.00	
Lochearnhead	-	60,894.52
Sub total	57,221.10	99,650.29
Charitable income to pass on		
Hitchin Initiative	150.00	150.00
Corporate matched funding passed to specific groups	47.32	-
RBL Poppy Appeal	67.10	-
	264.42	150.00
Scout Shop		
Scout Shop Expenditure	9,600.31	11,400.81
	9,600.31	11,400.81
Total payments	80,285.64	130,446.35

Receipts and Payments Accounts Summary

	2024	2023
	£	£
Total Receipts	77,568.57	118,915.23
Total payments	80,285.64	130,446.35
Net of receipts/(payments)	- 2,717.07	- 11,531.12
Cash funds last year end	82,449.81	93,980.93
Cash funds carried forward	79,732.74	82,449.81

Statement of assets and liabilities at the end of the year

	2024	2023
	£	£
Cash funds		
Bank current account	10,420.78	57,754.70
2nd 'Project' account	3,985.54	4,330.38
Savings Account	40,313.66	-
Paypal	299.93	325.48
Explorers	12,225.87	10,850.65
Equals Cards	0.59	0.59
Scout Shop current account	10,791.48	6,011.44
Scout shop Cash/Floats	22.86	25.00
Scout Shop Liabilities	- 289.20	-
Scout shop Debtors	1,961.23	3,151.57
Total cash funds	79,732.74	82,449.81

The above receipts and payments account and statement of assets and liabilities were approved by the Trustee Board on 23rd April 2025 and signed on their behalf by

Signature



Print Name

CRAIG WILSON	Treasurer
MIKE WELLS	Chair

Independent examiner's report to the trustees of Hitchin District Scout Council

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of the Hitchin District Scout Council for the year ended 31st December 2024.

Responsibilities and basis of report

As the charity trustees of the Hitchin District Scout Council, you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011 ('the Act').

I report in respect of my examination of the Hitchin District Scout Council accounts carried out under section 145 of the 2011 Act and in carrying out my examination I have followed all the applicable Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the Act.

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 giving me cause to believe that in any material respect:

1. accounting records were not kept in respect of the Hitchin District Scout Council as required by section 130 of the Act; or
2. the accounts do not accord with those records.

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.

Signed:



Name:

P MORGAN-MALES

Relevant professional qualification or membership of professional bodies (if any):

Address:

65 BENSLOW RISE HITCHIN SG4 9QY

Date:

31/3/25