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# Ajax Sea Scout Group and Explorer Sea Scout Unit

Annual Report and Accounts  
for the year ended 31<sup>st</sup> March 2025

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**National Sea Scout Regatta 2025 – River Thames**

## GROUP CHAIR'S REPORT

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The 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. Effective Trustee Board governance helps our volunteers deliver fantastic programmes that give young people skills for life.

The Trustee roles consist of a Chair, Treasurer, Secretary, and trustees. Following the last Annual General Meeting on 8 September 2024, Andy Davidson stepped down as Chair and as of June 2025, I have taken on the role.

Ajax Sea Scouts is a registered charity, and all the leaders, helpers, instructors and trustees are volunteers. I'd like to start by giving a huge thank you to all the volunteers that make Ajax Sea Scouts such a success. Especially to all the leaders and assistant leaders of Beavers, Cubs, Scouts and Explorers, who have delivered on providing an adventurous, educational and fun programme, in a safe and friendly environment.

A special thank you goes to Chris West, who after 17 years as a member of Ajax and 7 years as the Group Scout Leader, will be stepping back from his position at the end of this year. Your hard work and dedication to the group have been immeasurable and is truly appreciated.

Assistance from parents will, as always, be vital to help fill the forthcoming vacancies in roles and responsibilities. If anyone is considering coming on board and joining our leadership team you don't need a scouting background and there will be plenty of support and encouragement. We will be requiring all kinds of support from managing a sections uniform sale, looking after the minibus or volunteering at one of our few fundraising events. Please look out for requests.

The Financial Report for the year ended 31 Mar 2025 covers the Group's strong financial position and can found on p17. Thank you to our Group Treasurer, Peter Drysdale, for preparing this report but also managing the Group's financial records throughout the year.

Below I am pleased to outline the management of the Group's facilities, equipment, fundraising, and volunteering since the AGM on 8 September 2024.

### Facilities:

- Over the coming year we will need help from families and supporters with maintenance. We frequently run maintenance days which include activities such as painting, cleaning, gardening, tidying and organising. Please look out for our regular requests.
- This year saw minimal facility spending, unlike previous years when projects included the new storage compound (opened March 2024) and roof and gutter repairs.
- However, there are many other future projects that are required to support core Scouting activities and so we appreciate every families support with fundraising to enable these.

### Equipment:

- There has been no significant investment in new equipment over the last 12 months but there have been costs incurred for repairs to the minibus, the power boats and trailers.

### Fundraising:

- Membership fees do not fully cover operating costs and so the group need extra funds to upgrade facilities and maintain equipment. Therefore, Ajax holds several fundraising events each year and we depend on families to support them.
- I'm pleased to report that Ajax had a very successful fundraising season during Spring and Summer this year. A total in excess of £22,200 (2024: £18,400), net of costs, was raised across four events:
  - Ajax Plant Sale, 3-4 May 2025: ~£4,100
  - Esher May Fair, 17 May 2025: ~£13,500
  - Tea Tent, National Sea Scout Regatta, 5-6 July 2025: ~£1,100
  - Bar, Claygate Flower Show, 12 July 2025: ~£3,500
- Congratulations and thank you to all of our supporters and volunteers who helped plan, coordinate and staff our fundraising events over the last 12 months. We literally couldn't do it without you and so please look out for our requests for volunteers for future events.

### Volunteering:

- A big thank you to all the leaders, trustees, parents and others who have supported the Group over the last 12 months. We are dependent upon volunteers and so truly value your support.
- Unfortunately, our Section leadership teams remain understrength. We would welcome assistance from parents and volunteers who are able to commit time on a regular basis. Please contact the relevant Section Leader if you can help or if you would like to know more.
- All families are required to honour the parent commitment as follows. So please consider how you can help!

- Assist at the Group's principal fund-raising event, currently the Esher May Fair
- Assist at a minimum of one other fund-raising event as requested.
  - Claygate Flower Show
  - Plant Sale
  - Regatta Tea Tent
  - AGM BBQ
- Assist at a minimum of one Maintenance Day
- Provide help when the leaders ask for special events, for example lorry loading for summer camp or setting up for Cub camp.

And finally...

- Take on a 'Personal Parental Responsibility' from a list provided or as otherwise agreed – these include uniform shop seller, key role in a fundraising committee, group admin role etc.

Or, if only you cannot take on a specific responsibility from above

- Attend 1 additional fund-raising event AND 1 additional maintenance day throughout the year.



Volunteers at Ajax Tea Tent at the National Sea Scout Regatta



The largest plant sale to date!

Nicola McCrossan  
Group Chair, Ajax Sea Scouts  
[nicola.mccrossan@ajax.org.uk](mailto:nicola.mccrossan@ajax.org.uk)  
07734 190427



## GROUP LEAD VOLUNTEER'S REPORT

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### Group Lead Volunteer Chris West writes:

Another year packed full of excitement, adventures and also changes at Ajax, as we adopt the new way of working in Scouting, here I'm going to reflect on some of the year's activities and events. But as this might be my last report as the lead volunteer of the group, I thought I might also look back on the changes that happened in the past few years since I took over.

The individual section leaders have of course written their own reports regarding the major activities they got up to, so I won't bore you by repeating all the wonderful things the sections have been up to in the past year.

As for group events, the big event at the end of the year is always remembrance Sunday. Last year's event was the first one we've run since the council changed the rules and forced us into hiring a professional company to close the road for us, so that we could perform our usual parade. The event took a considerable amount more planning, including the application of a grant from the council to pay for the company to close the road. The event itself went without a hitch, and we had the usual excellent turnout at the green. I want to say a big thank you to my colleague at the Dittons Scouts, Suzan Baker, their group lead volunteer, who bore the brunt of the administrative work for this event.

The big news in Scouting at the of the year was the Scout associations revamp of our organisation, which included new training and new structures for all scout Groups. When this came to pass my title as Group Scout Leader was gone and I'm now known as the Group Lead Volunteer. There have been similar changes introduced on other positions in the group with many intermediate roles being removed and the system being simplified to a teams-based structure. The change also introduced a whole new training system, mostly online, which resulted in a considerable amount of work to get all of our leaders (they're not called that anymore) trained up on the use of the new system. And then through some new safety training to make sure that we're all as fully safe as we possibly can be. As with any new system there were glitches and bumps in the road, but it now seems to be up and running fully and we have a new digital platform for managing adults within the group.

All my free time at the start of this year was occupied by looking after these new systems and helping the group successfully integrate into their use. The next major event for me was our St George's Day ceremony that we held at the WAC.

We have in the past few years been experimenting with alternative events to mark St George's Day, a very important event in the scouting calendar. This has been whilst listening to the feedback of our young people that they no longer wish to march to a church for the same story they've heard every year. We have in the past been attending small weekend camps, along with The Dittons, but they were unable to do that this year, and our Scouts were looking for something different anyway. So, we looked at another alternative way of marking this important scouting date. We did for, the first time, get the entire group together in our building, something that rarely happens, not even on AGM days, and we held a small ceremony restating our Scout promise together in our building. It was wonderful to get all the sections together at the same time.

As the summer term kicked in and the older sections got back on the water, we were grateful for significantly less rain compared to the previous year, and the allowance to get on the water without the hindrance of a sunken boat or a flooded river. Meanwhile in the background, the new Group management teams were starting to meet and make decisions about equipment and buildings, to take the group forward. I can't complete the summary of the year without talking about the Troop and Unit summer camp of course, my personal highlight of the year. We were once again back at Chichester Harbour, a familiar spot near the Cobnor activity Centre. We had a wonderful 10 days away with only one significant day of rain, which didn't stop activities. There were plenty of activities on and off the water for the Scout and Explorers to enjoy. It was an amazing camp. Next year's camp is already booked back at Roadford Lake in Devon, any parents reading this make sure you have the dates written down.

A few months ago, I announced my intention to step down as the Group Lead Volunteer of Ajax, at the end of this year. I've been in Ajax for 17 years and for the last 7 years I've been the one in charge. When I took over from Mark Marriott, I felt I had some very big boots to fill and it certainly took me some time to figure out how to do things. In my time of being the lead volunteer, we've seen the group grow its footprint on 2 occasions, once by installing a new fence around the compound, which was moved back onto the grass to claim more land for us. And again, with the takeover of half the car park across the road with a new compound. We've also had a number of internal improvements. Replacing the dens with changing rooms was a project I proposed to make our building more suitable for the modern age and provide better

changing facilities for young people. Alongside that was the installation of new toilets and a shower/accessible toilet facility. I know these changes have made a huge impact on how the Group operates. Slightly less noticeably, we had a massive electrical overhaul, making our building safer and easier for leaders to use. I've been in no means in charge of these projects alone, they took people to securing the funding, work with contractors and managing the design and implementation process of getting them done, far too many to name here but I think you will all your support to making these amazing projects happen.

I think the most significantly challenging part of my 7 years in charge was when we had the pandemic. Keeping scouting alive remotely was certainly a challenge for everyone involved and it was a very unique time for all of us. I was very gratified to see that we were recognised after the pandemic as being one of the groups which not only survived through Covid but also managed to somehow grow in numbers. Since the pandemic scouting has of course continued, but I would be remiss in not mentioning that it is very apparent that the interest in volunteering has significantly dropped since then and recruiting of leaders has become a bigger and bigger challenge. And it's not a local problem either, Scout groups across the country are suffering from a lack of adult volunteers.

Whilst I am stepping down from the main role of being GLV, I do very much want to keep involved with Ajax, I'm already well into planning next year's summer camp for example. It is my hope that I can continue to help the group in various ways, either remotely or by attending the occasional camps or weekends away in the future. Volunteering for Ajax for 17 years has been both challenging and exciting, I've learnt so many new things, made many new friends, and have a lot of fun along the way.

I want to say a big thank you to Ruth Mortby, who stepped down as Cub leader earlier this year. We will miss Ruth for her amazing drive, enthusiasm and creativity in creating amazing and unusual events for the Cubs. Dan has written a lovely tribute to her work in the Cub report, so I will leave it to him to tell you more about her work.

Lastly, as always, I want to thank all the other volunteers that make Ajax happen, everyone works very hard giving up many many hours both behind the scenes and with the young people to make sure that amazing adventures happen and ask Scouts have a wonderful time. Thank you all.

## BEAVER SCOUT COLONY

(For young people aged 6 to 8)

**Beaver Scout Team Leader Dan Callaghan writes:**

What a year it's been for our Beaver Colony! We've had adventures, challenges, and plenty of fun moments that have helped our young people grow in confidence and skills.

### Highlights of the Year

My personal highlight has to be the Beaver Camp at Walton Firs, our first proper offsite overnight camp. Getting all the Beavers through the night (and for some, their first night away with Ajax) was brilliant to see. It really showed just how resilient and brave our young people are. We had some fantastic games and they loved charging around the site on the stamp trail. Thank you to all the leaders who made the weekend possible, including the Cub camp team who allowed me to split my attention between the two camps which ran at the same time.



It's been great to welcome Laura, Jane, and Keith to the team this year. They've brought fresh energy and ideas that have made such a difference to the team. They've all fitted in so well and the Beavers seem to love sharing all their facts and eclectic pieces of information with them.

### What We've Been Up To

Our weekly meetings have been jam-packed with all sorts of activities. The Beavers never seem to get bored, and we've covered loads of different topics. We've worked on skills like team leader challenges, first aid and problem-solving, circus skills, and even t-shirt folding! Beavers picked up some important safety skills through the Green Cross Code work. Creative activities have included hand puppet making, biscuit decorating, recycling inventions, and making bird feeders. The nature side of things covered walks, litter picking (combined with learning about our local area), and creating fairy dens at Hurst Park. Animal yoga was a hit, and we explored different animal habitats too. We've celebrated Chinese New Year, had a Brazil theme for New Year in Rio, enjoyed Christmas games, and marked St George's Day and Remembrance Sunday properly. For water activities, we managed to get all the Beavers afloat twice this year – they had hands-on experience with water safety and boat handling in both rowing boats and power boats.

### Thank You

To our parent volunteers, you've been amazing. Whether it's helping with activities or making sure everyone got their essential drink and biscuit during snack time, your support has been invaluable. We sadly said goodbye to Adrian during the summer term, as he moved up to help support the Cub team. Thank you for all your support in the Beaver team. Marina deserves a special mention. Her enthusiasm and creativity week in and week out have been absolutely brilliant throughout the year. She'll be really missed when she moves up to join the Cub team early next year. And of course, thank you to all our Beavers. Their enthusiasm and energy have made running this section such a joy. They've thrown themselves into everything we've done, and that's what makes it all worthwhile.

### What's Next

There are some changes coming, I'll be stepping down as Section Leader at the end of the year after a couple of great years in the role, though I'm hoping to be available where possible to help the team with transitions in the new year. Simone is starting with the Beaver team this term and has done her first muster with us.

Looking ahead, there's plenty more adventure and fun in store. Here's to another brilliant year of Scouting!

## **CUB SCOUT PACK**

(For young people aged 8 to 10½)

**Cub Scout Team Leader Dan Callaghan writes:**

This year has been one of significant change and growth for our Cub pack, filled with adventures, new faces, and plenty of memorable moments that have helped our young people develop their scouting skills and confidence.

### **A special mention for Ruth**

We must begin by paying tribute to Ruth, who stepped down as Section Leader after Easter following many outstanding years leading our Cubs. Ruth drove our programme with incredible passion and creativity, transforming ordinary meetings into extraordinary adventures. Over her years with us, she created some truly spectacular experiences that Cubs still talk about, from the Charlie and the Chocolate Factory themed escape room complete with smoke machines, chocolate rivers, and lickable wallpaper, to Halloween and Detective themed tabletop puzzles, and an Egyptian themed escape room with amazing 3D challenges.

Ruth's vision gave birth to Wizard Camp, which has become hugely popular and has now run twice. She has a talent for finding incredible opportunities like the Legoland sleepovers that gave our Cubs experiences they'll never forget. Perhaps most remarkably, during the challenging COVID period, Ruth kept all our Cubs engaged and connected through remote musters, including an innovative remote space-themed camp that showed her dedication to never letting anything stop the Cubs from having adventures.

Ruth's creativity, energy, and commitment have left a lasting mark on our pack. She will be greatly missed, and we're incredibly grateful for everything she brought to the Cubs over the years.

### **Changes in Leadership**

Following Ruth's departure, I stepped in as Section Leader at the start of the summer term to keep things running (as smoothly as possible). While I'll be stepping back from the role myself at the end of the year, I'll remain available to support the team during the transition period next year.

We've been fortunate to welcome Ed as a leader, who has now completed his first full year with us. His inaugural activity was the sausage sizzle at Thames Ditton, a great way to start! We were also joined by Adrian (from Beavers) during the summer term, who has been brilliant in helping support the Cub pack.

Our young leader JoJo has been with us throughout the year, and it's been fantastic having a younger person for the Cubs to interact. The Cubs really respond well to having someone closer to their age involved in the programme.

### **Camps and Major Adventures**

Winter Camp at Walton Firs was a great success with its detective theme and outdoor physical challenges, the Cubs seemed to love charging around/over/under the slightly damp obstacle course!

Wizard Camp was run again this year, with added magic from a behind the scenes greenscreen workshop where Cubs got to practice their broom flying skills or creep past a sleeping dragon.

Our summer camp at Boidier Hurst was fantastic, with a survival theme that took the Cubs back to basic scouting skills. The weather was kind to us, giving us plenty of opportunities to roam around the site and really make the most of being surrounded by nature. It was brilliant watching the Cubs develop their outdoor skills and confidence, (also a big thanks to Ruth for coming back to support us with this camp, it was critical as I was also trying to deliver the Beaver camp at the same time, lesson learned for next time!)

### **Water Activities**

We managed to deliver boating again this year, though slightly reduced from previous years due to limitations in the number of leaders with permits for different activities. In Cubs we aim to give young people a taster of different types of boats as opposed to instruction/coaching on a particular type of craft. Despite this, all Cubs had the chance to get afloat in both rowing boats (walker bays or coypus) and powerboats.

The Cubs moving up to Scouts were treated to a bonus water session in kayaks by their new Scout leaders, many thanks to Robert and Alex for delivering this extra opportunity. I know it was really appreciated by the Cubs as a special send-off.

### **Weekly Programme and Badge Work**

Throughout the year, our Cubs have tackled a diverse range of activities and badge work. Badge achievements included Athletics, Disability Awareness, and Fire Safety, all important skills that have helped broaden their understanding and capabilities.



We had a brilliant circus skills night delivered by an external provider where the Cubs mastered diabolos and then had great fun developing their clown personas using other circus equipment including unicycles, spinning plates, and juggling gear.

The good weather meant we could make the most of outdoor activities with some excellent rounders games and activities on Long Ditton Recreation Ground. We also enjoyed a walk around Bushy Park, making the most of our local green spaces.

Other activities included backwards cooking and important mental health activities that helped the Cubs understand and talk about wellbeing.



### **Looking Ahead**

As we head into next year, we're looking for people passionate about Cubs to step forward as new leaders. We encourage anyone with an interest in the section to reach out to any of the Cub team to discuss how you can support the section and help continue the excellent work that's been built up over the years.

The Cubs have shown incredible adaptability this year through all the changes, and their enthusiasm and energy continue to make running this section such a rewarding experience.

### **Thank You**

Thank you to all our parent volunteers who have supported camps, activities, and weekly meetings throughout the year. Special thanks to Claire and Annette who have joined the Cub team as parent helpers this year. Claire has also committed time to regular weekly activities. Both Claire and Annette bring fresh ideas and energy to our planning.

Thanks to Ed, Adrian, James, and JoJo for all their contributions to making this such a successful year. I'm looking forward to continuing to work with each of you this term as well as Lucy who makes a return from Norway to rejoin Ajax after 3 years away.

And of course, thank you to all our Cubs for their energy, enthusiasm, and willingness to try new things. They've embraced every challenge and adventure we've thrown at them.

Here's to continuing Ruth's legacy of creativity and adventure as we head into another exciting year of Cubs!

## SEA SCOUT TROOP

(For young people aged 10½ to 14)

**Sea Scout Team Leader Robert Elliott writes:**

Our year started with boating sessions through to the end of September, giving the opportunity for pulling after dark on the river.

After coming 2<sup>nd</sup> in the District cooking competition in 2023 Ajax won this year beating other groups in Esher. With a base of ingredients, the teams select other items from a central table and have to prepare and plate a meal for the judges to taste, using the standard camp cooking equipment.

Our hike team enjoyed the challenge of the night hike in October, but they forgot to answer any of the questions, so did not fare well in the rankings. Thank you to the parents who manned one of the bases for this event.



Thank you to Chris for running our PL/APL training day, an essential part of our year to teach the older scouts the responsibility of running their patrols, and a fun day to explore some team building activities.

We had a successful community carol event for local residents and parents at the end of the Christmas term offering mince pies and mulled wine. With thanks to Mary Ruth Mortby for piano accompaniment to the Scouts and Young Leaders singing some well-known carols.

Early in the Spring term the Scouts had an opportunity to decide what they would like to do in a future muster. The overwhelming response was a talent show, which took place at the end of January followed by pizzas. Well done to all of the participants for coming up with their entertainments and to the winner of the evening, Erin, for her demonstrations of Irish dance.

January saw us returning to Sandown for an evening on the dry ski slopes and on the high ropes.

Our highlight of the term was Winter Camp in the New Forest. This was at a new venue, Braggers Wood. We had beautiful weather for a hike around Christchurch harbour. On the Sunday we stayed on site for archery, tomahawk throwing and rifle shooting.



Other musters included a demonstration on inflating a life raft, cooking pancakes, reminders on some of the nautical skills to be used when boating. We had two attempts at visiting the local fire station, but on each occasion the watch was called out on a shout, so we had to abandon the visit.

We started our summer term this year with a group wide celebration of St George's day. This was held on site at the WAC with a reminder of why we do Scouting and a re-commitment to the Scout promise followed by hot dogs.

We held a gardening muster lead by May Hainault and Ali Harley learning about different type of plants. We planted seeds for sunflowers and cucumbers, and cuttings for dog wood to take home and grow.

We had a good season of boating this year, with none of the river flow problems of the previous two years. We taught the younger Scouts the art of pulling in our walker bays and gave older Scouts sessions in kayaks, the gigs and Scout class boats.

Monica Harding, our local MP, visited Ajax to celebrate VE day. We took her out on the water to show her some of our water activities.

At the Esher May Fair the older Scouts enjoyed running a candyfloss and ice cream stall, helping on what was a very successful fund-raising event. A group of Scouts and Explorers also volunteered at a half marathon event at Hampton Court.

Our pulling and kayaking musters helped us in preparation for the Annual Sea Scout regatta at Hampton Court, where we performed well against the competition.



For Summer Camp this year we returned to Cobnor for a week's activities, including kayaking, sailing and hiking. We sent each of our three patrols off on an overnight expedition to hike round Thorney Island, camping on a local field before hiking back to camp the following morning. It was great to be able share the opportunity of sailing one of our gigs on the harbour.

Thank you to my team of willing volunteers this year: Alex, Andy, Gerard, Jason, Phil and Rod with additional support from Chris and Diane.

## **SEA SCOUT EXPLORER UNIT**

(For young people aged 15 to 17)

**Explorer team leader Jan Harley writes:**

We have seen a big growth this year in the number of active Explorers, with the Unit, over the last year, growing to 24 members. The year started off with a "Pizza Paddle" – where the Explorers paddle to Hampton Court to earn a pizza on the beach. This was quickly followed up with the district cooking competition.

2024 was a good year for training, with many Explorers gaining valuable sailing qualifications at Cobnor in September 2024, and another trip in May 2025. We also had three more of our Explorers completing their RYA PB2 power boating qualifications.

We also had 14 of our Explorers take part in a Duke of Edinburgh Bronze Expedition last September. The plan was initially to do a rowing and kayaking expedition on the Thames. This had to be re-planned due to poor river conditions and became a two-day hike along the north downs. All Explorers successfully completed the Expedition despite one of the groups setting off in completely the wrong direction losing 4 hours of daylight in the process.

At the end of October, 13 of our Explorers joined us for Winter Camp on the Isle of Wight. The highlight of which was surfing on the beach at Compton Bay.

November saw most of our Explorers taking part in a "Discover Scuba Diving" PADI session. We ended the year with a trip to Hampton Court Palace to go Ice skating, as well as hosting our traditional Christmas event for the community.

In 2025, during the spring term, we focussed on Powerboating, Swimming, and First Aid training. We also managed a trip to White Spider for a climbing session and volunteering at the Hampton Court Half Marathon.

The National Sea Scout Regatta was a highlight for the Explorer Unit. The Explorers did well overall pulling in a solid haul of medals, including first place for the under 18 Gig Pulling (rowing) and first place for the under 16 kayaking.

Summer Camp was another highlight for the Unit. We had 14 Explorers taking part in our 10 day camp at Cobnor. The week was filled with sailing, hiking, paddleboarding and kayaking. As well as the dreaded Operation X, involving a 2-day hike along the North Down Way ending up with chips on the beach in Brighton.

We are now looking forward to our next big event which will be taking part in the Great River Race along with over 200 other boats along the 21 mile route from the Docklands of London to Richmond at the end of September.



## **OUR FLEET**

Work has continued in maintaining our fleet of boats. I want to say thank you to Andy Davison for his amazing repair work on our gigs. Also, thanks to Diane Davison, Alex Soden and Gerard Foley for their continued work in maintaining our fleet.

At a recent water activity meeting it was decided it is time to replace The Stokes, with a smaller and more suitable rib for the Group. It is therefore going up for sale soon, with the aim to purchase a replacement next year.

## **WATER ACTIVITIES TRAINING**

Ajax and Warspite continue jointly to operate a Royal Yachting Association 'Recognised Training Centre' at Thames Ditton, which delivers valuable training synergies for both Groups.

This year we have trained adults in Power boating, Paddle sport instructors, Paddle sport safety and rescue and offered training to issue Pulling Permits.

In addition to our own training, some of our younger adults have been doing well in achieving training from external suppliers, resulting in us gaining a new Dinghy Instructor and a Senior Dinghy Instructor

## **RONA SAILING PROJECT**

(For young people aged over 14)

Rona Sailing Project (RSP, [www.ronasailingproject.org.uk](http://www.ronasailingproject.org.uk)) is a registered charity which provides affordable sail training on purpose-built yachts. Their stated aim is to provide opportunities for young people to develop a sense of responsibility, resourcefulness and teamwork which will help them throughout their lives. Anyone over the age of 14 can apply for a place and we strongly recommend all Ajaccios to do so. In fact a number of the volunteer Skippers and Mates serving with RSP are Old Ajaccios!

We encourage our Explorers to get involved and take advantage of this amazing opportunity.

## **DUKE of EDINBURGH AWARDS**

(For young people aged over 14)

This year we have had several scouts achieving their bronze awards. Several more are awaiting their expedition section to be completed. We also have a few who have nearly completed Gold awards at the time of writing.

Diane has stepped down from running our DofE programme and the responsibility has passed to Jan Harley, our Explorer Team Lead. However with changes in leadership in Explorers, we need parents to step up and let Jan know if they have an interest in finding out more about DofE and doing the DofE training. It's only a day! Please think about it ... working with our young people on this programme is incredibly rewarding.

We'd like to offer special thanks to Diane for leading the DofE programme for Ajax, she's done an amazing job in getting so many young people through their DofE awards.

## **ROYAL NAVY RECOGNITION**

Ajax is one of just 105 Sea Scout Groups in the UK to be officially recognised by the Royal Navy and we have held this recognition continuously from the inception of the Group. Beyond the prestige of RN recognition, there are a number of tangible benefits including access to Grant Aid. We are currently discussing the best use of this year's grant with a view to continuing to improve our kayak fleet.

Following a relaunch of the scheme some years ago, all RN Recognised Groups are now affiliated with a local RN Unit. Together with nine other Groups in the London area, we are affiliated with the London University Royal Naval Unit.

To maintain RN recognition, all Groups are regularly reviewed to ensure the required standards are maintained. Due to changes in the operation of the scheme we have not had an inspection for some time, and we await further information on the relaunch of the review scheme.

## **THANKS**

It's been another amazing year at Ajax, the new compound across the road has been used to its full potential and has made a huge difference to our operation. Again, I want to echo the repeated comments that we are short on leaders, we need more volunteers and anything you can do to help will be appreciated.

For child joining or adult volunteering, go to: [www.ajax.org.uk/join](http://www.ajax.org.uk/join)

Lastly, I once again wish to give my heartfelt thanks to all the Leaders, Trustees, Instructors and helpers who volunteer so much time to make Ajax happen, thank you all!

**Chris West**

**GROUP SCOUT LEADER**



## ABOUT 4TH THAMES DITTON 'AJAX' SEA SCOUTS

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In common with all Scout groups, the 4<sup>th</sup> Thames Ditton 'Ajax' Sea Scouts (the "Group" or "Charity") is a charity established under the Royal Charter granted to The Scout Association dated 4<sup>th</sup> January 1912 as amended by supplemental charters dated 28<sup>th</sup> March 1949, 18<sup>th</sup> February 1959, 5<sup>th</sup> May 1967 and 19<sup>th</sup> July 1991. Trustees are appointed in accordance with the Policy, Organisation and Rules of the Scout Association.

### GROUP INFORMATION AS OF 31<sup>ST</sup> MARCH 2025

Charity Registration Number:	303764
Scout Association Registration Number:	25880
Honorary Roles:	
Group President	Mrs Marguerite Rollason MBE
Group Vice Presidents	Mrs Janet Barber Mrs Doreen Neal
Trustees Ex-Officio (Principal Officers):	
Group Chair	Vacant
Group Secretary	Anjani Srivastava
Group Treasurer	Peter Drysdale
Trustees Ex-Officio (Leadership Roles):	
Group Lead Volunteer	Chris West
Trustees Nominated:	
Group Advisers	George Barber Diane Davison Mark Faulkner Mark Marriott Alex Soden Raymond Mears
Youth Adviser	
Supporter	
Trustees Elected:	
Parent representative (Explorer unit)	Peter Lloyd-Jones
Parent representative (Beaver section)	Nicola McCrossan
Parent representative (Scout section)	Andrew Rowan
Parent representative (Scout section)	Heather Ryder
Parent representative (Cub section)	Nicola Slammon
Parent representative (Explorer unit)	Adrian Smith
Trustees Co-opted	
Special Projects Adviser	Andrew Roberts
Custodian Trustee:	The Scout Association Trust Corporation
Independent Examiner:	Barry Hitchens
Contact Name and Address:	Chris West 4 Hartford Road Epsom KT19 9JD

## TRUSTEES' REPORT

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The Trustees present their report and the financial statements for the 4<sup>th</sup> Thames Ditton 'Ajax' Sea Scout Group for the year ended 31<sup>st</sup> March 2025.

### Responsibilities of the Trustees

Charity law requires the Trustees to keep accounting records and prepare annual statements of account for the Charity which must be audited or independently examined and provided to the Charity Commission. In preparing the annual statement of accounts the Trustees are required to:

- Select suitable accounting policies and apply them consistently;
- Make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- Comply with applicable accounting standards subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the annual statement of accounts; and
- Prepare the annual statement of accounts on a going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to assume the Charity will continue its operations.

The Trustees are responsible for keeping proper accounting records which disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the Charity and are responsible for safeguarding its assets and hence taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

### Review of Activity of the Charity

The Group currently has an active Beaver Scout Colony, Cub Scout Pack and Sea Scout Troop and a partnership agreement with the Ajax Explorer Sea Scout Unit. Key details of each Section are as follows:

- The Beaver Colony is for boys and girls aged 6 to 8 years. The Colony meets once a week and as at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2025 had 26 members (2024: 22).
- The Cub Scout Pack is for boys and girls aged 8 to 10 ½ years. The Pack meets once a week and as at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2025 had 33 members (2024: 34).
- The Sea Scout Troop is for boys and girls aged 10 ½ to 14. The Troop normally meets twice a week and as at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2025 had 38 members (2024: 38).
- The Explorer Sea Scout Unit is for boys and girls aged 14 ½ to 18. The Unit normally meets once a week and as at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2025 had 26 members (2024: 22)

All Sections have continued to work in accordance with the progressive training scheme as laid down by the Scout Association.

The Group has continued to operate a Royal Yachting Association Training Centre based at the Water Activities Centre and operated jointly with Warspite Sea Scouts. The RYA Centre's Principal is supported by a team of RYA Instructors with qualifications covering sailing, power boating, VHF communications and first aid.

The Group is one of just 105 Sea Scout Groups in the United Kingdom recognised by the Royal Navy. This prestigious and beneficial recognition is subject to regular inspections at approximately 18-month intervals. To retain recognition, the Group must demonstrate that it continues to achieve the standard required, in appearance, dress, bearing and badge work, as well as showing progress in efficiency.

### Reserves

The Trustees have adopted a formal policy on reserves which is reflected in these accounts. The policy provides that reserves be maintained at a level which has regard to:

- The risks associated with each stream of income and expenditure varying from that budgeted
- The planned activity level
- The Group's commitments
- The need for adequate readily realisable resources to meet the Group's commitments (after subscriptions and camp fees) for the coming twelve-month period.

Readily realisable resources are defined as the balances at the bank less current liabilities and the balance on designated funds for WAC building development.

As at 31 March 2025, the Group held reserves of £30,000 (2024: £30,000), which is the minimum level of reserves required under the policy.

## **Investment Policy**

The Group does not have sufficient funds to invest in longer term investments. All funds are held in cash or "at call" short term investments with The Scout Association, Skipton Building Society and Cambridge & Counties Bank.

## **Governance**

The Group's governing documents are those of The Scout Association. They consist of a Royal Charter, The By-Laws of the Association and The Policy, Organisation and Rules of The Scout Association.

The Group is a trust established under rules which are common to all Scout Groups.

The Group's Trustees are appointed in accordance with The Policy, Organisation and Rules of The Scout Association, to serve on the Group's Trustee Board. As charity trustees acting collectively through the Group's Trustee Board, the Trustees must:

- Ensure that the Charity is carrying out its purposes for the public benefit
- Comply with the Charity's governing document and the law
- Act in the Charity's best interests
- Manage the Charity's resources responsibly
- Act with reasonable care and skill

## **Risk Assessment**

The Group Trustee Board has identified and assessed the major risks to which it believes the Group is exposed as follows:

*Injury to leaders, members and helpers:* The Group, through the capitation fees, contributes to The Scout Association's national accident insurance policy. Risk Assessments are undertaken before all activities.

*Damage to buildings and equipment:* The Group would request the use of buildings and equipment from neighbouring organisations. The Group has sufficient buildings and contents insurance in place to mitigate against permanent loss.

*Reduced income from fund raising:* The Group is primarily reliant upon income from subscriptions and fund raising. The Group does hold a reserve to ensure the continuity of activities should there be a major reduction in income. The Committee could increase the level of subscriptions to increase the income to the Group either temporarily or permanently.

*Reduction or loss of members:* The Group provides activities for young people aged 6 to 18. If there were a reduction in membership of a particular Section or of the Group as a whole then there would have to be a contraction, consolidation or closure of a Section, or in the worst case scenario, the complete closure of the Group.

*Reduction or loss of leaders:* The Group is totally reliant upon volunteers to run and administer the activities of the Group. If there were a reduction in the number of leaders to an unacceptable level in a particular Section or the Group as a whole then there would have to be a contraction, consolidation or closure of a Section, or in the worst case scenario, the complete closure of the Group.

The Group requires two signatories for all payments to provide reasonable assurance against material mismanagement or loss of money and holds comprehensive insurance policies to ensure that insurable risks are covered.

## **Group's Purpose**

The purpose of the Group is to actively engage and support young people in their personal development, empowering them to make a positive contribution to society. The Group aims to achieve this by providing an enjoyable and attractive scheme of progressive training based on the values of scouting, the Scout Promise and the Scout Law, and guided by trained adult leadership.

## INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S REPORT

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### **4<sup>th</sup> Thames Ditton Ajax Sea Scouts Charity Number 303764**

#### **Report of the Independent examiner to the Trustees of 4<sup>th</sup> Thames Ditton Ajax Sea Scouts**

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of the above Charity for the year to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2025 that are set out on the pages attached.

#### **Responsibilities and basis of report**

As the charity's trustees, 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 Trust's 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 that gives me cause to believe that in any material respect:

- a) the accounting records were not kept in accordance with section 130 of the Charities Act or
- b) the accounts did not comply with the accounting records or
- c) the accounts did not comply with the applicable requirements concerning the form and content of the 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 the 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.

Barry Hitchens- Australian Society of Accountants  
24 Effingham Road, Long Ditton, Surrey, KT6 5JY



1.8.25

## FINANCIAL REPORT - YEAR ENDING 31 MARCH 2025

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Prepared By Peter Drysdale, Group Treasurer

Ajax Sea Scout Group remains in good financial health. Cash balances at the end of the year were up on last year. We continued to invest in our boats and facilities.

### **Operating Highlights**

The accounts below are laid out according to the Charity Commission's format. The numbers in this commentary are taken from our management accounts which gives a more meaningful narrative. In particular for example payments for activities are included in Income, but from an operating point of view they are not income.

In round numbers, cash in the bank as at the year-end stands at £82,400 - a net increase of over £8,000 over 2024.

Operating income decreased from £35,000 to £31,700. Membership fees (including Gift Aid) was slightly down at £26,000. The previous year was flattered by the one-off sale of a minibus (£4,800) but bank interest increased from £1,900 to £4,400.

Operating costs dropped by £5,000 from £44,000 to £38,600. This was mainly because the previous year included repairs to the roof (£9,000). Utility costs reduced but we had to pay for repairs to the minibus, the power boats and trailers.

Fortunately, fundraising was good. The Esher May Fair realized over £11,400, slightly more than last year. The Plant Sale and Claygate Flower Show realized nearly £7,500 between them – £2,500 more than last year. Fundraising remains important for us as the membership fees do not fully cover the operating costs.

There were a large number of activities, total income exceeded £35,000 but overall broke even (net cost £300).

Expenditure on major items was £7,000, mainly net £5,000 to complete the new trailer park. £2,000 went on sundry smaller items eg tents, sound system for the Esher May Fair.

### **Notes to the financial statements 31 March 2025**

#### **1 Basis of preparation of accounts**

##### **1.1 Basis of accounting**

These accounts have been prepared under the historical cost convention with items recognised at cost or transaction value unless otherwise stated in the relevant note(s) to these accounts. The accounts have been prepared in accordance with the Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (the Charities SORP) and with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the United Kingdom and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102). The Charity constitutes a public benefit entity as defined by FRS 102.

##### **1.2 Going Concern**

The Trustees consider that there are no material uncertainties about the Charity's ability to continue as a going concern.

#### **2. Accounting Policies**

##### **2.1 Income recognition**

All regularly recurring income is recognised in the period in which it is received. This applies to Subscriptions, Gift Aid on subscriptions and Investment Income.



Donations are recognised once received. In the event that a donation is subject to conditions that require a level of performance before the Charity is entitled to the funds, the income is deferred and not recognised until either those conditions are fully met, or the fulfilment of those conditions is wholly within the control of the Charity and it is probable that those conditions will be fulfilled in the reporting period.

Any Gift Aid amount recovered on a donation is considered to be part of that gift and is treated as an addition to the same fund as the initial donation unless the donor or the terms of the appeal have specified otherwise. It is recognised in the period in which it is received.

Restricted donations and grants will be recognised in the period in which the associated costs are incurred and until then will be treated as creditors.

Income from Fundraising and Activities is recognised in the period in which the fundraising event or activity takes place. Deposits received in prior periods will be deferred until the period in which the activity takes place.

All other income is recognised in the period in which it is received.

## 2.2 Expenditure and liabilities

A liability exists where there is a legal or constructive obligation committing the Charity to that expenditure, it is probable that settlement will be required and the amount of the obligation can be measured reliably. All such liabilities will ordinarily be discharged as soon as possible. Only material liabilities not discharged by the end of the period will be accrued.

Some annual costs eg Insurance, Subscriptions, Rent and other similar dues which extend beyond the current period and which on a strict accruals basis would to that extent ordinarily be accrued, will be recognised in full in the period in which they are paid.

All expenses including support costs and governance costs are allocated or apportioned to the applicable expenditure headings.

The classification between headings is as follows:

- Expenditure on fundraising includes all expenditure associated with raising funds for the charity.
- Expenditure on charitable activities of the Group includes all costs associated with furthering the charitable purposes of the Group through the provision of its charitable activities.

All expenditure on fundraising events or activities is recognised in the period in which the fundraising event or activity occurs. Prior period deposits will be treated as prepayments.

Materiality: Accruals of expenditure other than that for Fundraising or Activities will only be made where they exceed £500 individually or £1,000 in total.

## 3 Land and buildings at Ditton Reach

The property comprising land and buildings at Ditton Reach that are occupied jointly by Ajax Sea Scouts and Warspite Sea Scouts is held by the Scout Association Trust Corporation (SATC) as tenant under a lease granted on 2 February 2024 by Elmbridge Borough Council as landlord. SATC holds the lease as custodian trustee on behalf of both Groups as beneficiaries. The Groups are responsible for the performance of the tenant's obligations under the lease, which expires on 6 December 2078.

The rent under the lease, which is currently £250 per annum, is subject to indexation adjustment on 6 December 2028 and on every fifth anniversary of that date. The lease contains restrictive covenants that among other things (1) prohibit the assignment or transfer of the lease, or the grant of a security interest in the lease, and (2) govern the permitted subletting, hire, occupation and use of the property.

As a consequence of the restrictive covenants in the lease, Ajax considers that its beneficial interest in the lease does not have any market value.

The Groups have entered into a formal agreement between themselves to govern the management and administration of the leased property, and to coordinate the performance of the tenant's obligations. Among other things, this intergroup agreement (1) allocates parts of the leased property to each Group for that Group's exclusive use, and (2) establishes a joint liaison committee between the Groups

#### **4 Funds**

Unrestricted General Funds are available for use at the discretion of the Trustees in furtherance of the general objectives of the Charity. Designated Funds are funds set aside out of unrestricted General Funds for specific purposes or projects. Restricted Funds are funds subject to specific restrictive conditions imposed by the donors or by the purpose of the appeal.

#### **5 Insurance Policies**

The entire WAC building occupied by Ajax and Warspite is insured for a reinstatement cost of £1,417,500 under a joint insurance policy. The premium for buildings insurance cover is allocated 75% to Ajax and 25% to Warspite, which reflects the respective areas of the building occupied by each Group. Ajax has also insured the Group's building contents and equipment for a reinstatement cost of £99,828 and its boats for a reinstatement cost of £95,000 in aggregate.

<b><u>Income &amp; Expenditure 2024 - 2025</u></b>	<b><u>Notes</u></b>	<b><u>2025</u></b> £	<b><u>2024</u></b> £
Income from			
Donations, Legacies. Subscriptions and similar income	1	28,882	54,925
Camp fees		35,529	43,719
Other activities in furtherance of the Charities objects			
Fundraising		35,027	34,466
Investment Income		4,432	1,940
<b>Total</b>		<b>103,870</b>	<b>135,050</b>
Expenditure on:			
Fundraising Costs		15,361	17,671
Expenses of the activities by the Group		83,179	121,821
<b>Total</b>		<b>98,540</b>	<b>139,492</b>
<b>Net Income</b>		<b>5,330</b>	<b>(4,442)</b>

<b><u>Balance Sheet</u></b>	<b><u>Notes</u></b>	<b><u>2025</u></b>	<b><u>2024</u></b>
Reconciliation of Funds			
Total Funds Brought Forward		77,973	82,415
Total Funds Carried Forward		83,302	77,973

<b><u>Current Assets</u></b>			
Cash at bank and in hand	2	82,390	74,216
Debtors	3	6,796	2,717
Stock of Uniform		3,032	4,393
Creditors: Amounts falling due within one year	4	(8,916)	(3,353)
<b>Net Assets</b>		<b>83,302</b>	<b>77,973</b>

<b><u>Represented by:</u></b>		<b><u>2025</u></b>	<b><u>2024</u></b>
Restricted Funds		500	500
Designated Funds		52,802	47,473
Unrestricted Funds		30,000	30,000
		<b>83,302</b>	<b>77,973</b>

## Notes to the Accounts

<b>1</b>	<b><u>Analysis of Donations etc</u></b>	<b>2025</b>	<b>2024</b>
		<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>
	Subscriptions	25,219	25,796
	Donations and Legacies	1,870	2,924
	Grants	0	20,000
	Covid Grant		
	Other	1,793	6,205
	<b>Total</b>	<b>28,882</b>	<b>54,925</b>

<b>2</b>	<b><u>Cash at bank and in hand</u></b>	<b>2025</b>	<b>2024</b>
		<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>
	Current Accounts - HSBC		
	Camp	6,827	6,571
	Main	938	1,450
	Nr 3	0	0
	Bmm	1,878	3,766
	Soldo	0	0
	Subs	2,179	1,749
	Equals Money	925	233
	<b>Total</b>	<b>13,769</b>	<b>13,769</b>
	Investment Accounts		
	Scout Association	0	0
	Skipton	17,788	4,444
	Cambridge & Counties	50,855	56,003
	<b>Total</b>	<b>69,643</b>	<b>60,447</b>
	<b>Total</b>	<b>82,390</b>	<b>74,216</b>

<b>3</b>	<b><u>Debtors</u></b>	<b>2025</b>	<b>2024</b>
		<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>
	Cobnor	5,676	2,717
	Activities		
	Gift Aid		
	Other	1,120	
		<b>6,796</b>	<b>2,717</b>

<b>4 Creditors</b>	<b>2025</b>	<b>2024</b>
	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>
Regatta JV	3,207	3,138
Summer Camp Deposits	2,890	
Esher May Fair Deposits	1,330	215
Cobnor	919	
Other	570	
	<hr/> 8,916	<hr/> 3,353

<b>5 Designated Funds</b>	Op Balance	Income	Expenditure	Redesignated	Cl Balance
	£	£	£	£	£
Building Development	18473	3,280		6,049	27,802
Building Repairs	0	892	892		0
Fundraising Equipment	2500	965	965	-2,500	0
All Craft	1500			1,000	2,500
Tentage		328	328	500	500
Minibus		7,000			7,000
HQ Security	15000			-1,000	14,000
New Lease & Trailer Park	10000		4,951	-4,049	1,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>47,473</b>	<b>12,465</b>	<b>7,136</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>52,802</b>

These accounts for the year ending 31 March 2025 were approved by the Group's trustees at a meeting of the Group's Trustee Board held on 9 September 2025.

Authorised signatories for and on behalf of the Group's trustees:



Chris West, Group Scout Leader



Peter Drysdale, Group Treasurer



Nicola McCrossan, Group Chair



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# Ajax Sea Scout Group and Explorer Sea Scout Unit

## KEY CONTACTS

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Group Lead Volunteer	Chris West	07967 806818	<a href="mailto:gsl@ajax.org.uk">gsl@ajax.org.uk</a>
Beaver Colony	Dan Callaghan	07840 290044	<a href="mailto:beavers@ajax.org.uk">beavers@ajax.org.uk</a>
Cub Pack	Dan Callaghan	07840 290044	<a href="mailto:cubs@ajax.org.uk">cubs@ajax.org.uk</a>
Sea Scout Troop	Robert Elliott	07896 518604	<a href="mailto:troop@ajax.org.uk">troop@ajax.org.uk</a>
Explorer Sea Scout Unit	Jan Harley	07801 135289	<a href="mailto:explorers@ajax.org.uk">explorers@ajax.org.uk</a>
Group Chair	Nicola McCrossan	07734 190427	<a href="mailto:nicola.mccrossan@ajax.org.uk">nicola.mccrossan@ajax.org.uk</a>
Group Secretary	Anjani Srivastava	07850 239833	<a href="mailto:secretary@ajax.org.uk">secretary@ajax.org.uk</a>
Group Treasurer	Peter Drysdale		<a href="mailto:treasurer@ajax.org.uk">treasurer@ajax.org.uk</a>

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For more information about this report or membership of Ajax contact:

Chris West

Email: [gsl@ajax.org.uk](mailto:gsl@ajax.org.uk)

For child joining or adult volunteering, go to: [www.ajax.org.uk/join](http://www.ajax.org.uk/join)

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Ajax Sea Scout Group and Explorer Sea Scout Unit  
The Chiefy Sharman Water Activities Centre  
19a Ditton Reach  
Thames Ditton  
Surrey KT7 0XB

(No facility to receive mail at this address)

Telephone: 020 8398 4777

Website: [www.ajax.org.uk](http://www.ajax.org.uk)

Ajax Sea Scouts is a Registered Charity No: 303764