



Wistaston Scout Group (35th South West Cheshire)

Registered Charity No: 520281

www.wistastonscoutgroup.org.uk

ANNUAL REPORT YEAR ENDING DECEMBER 31st 2023

I reported last year that our youth numbers, Beavers, Cubs and Scouts, had returned to pre pandemic level. I am pleased to say that trend has continued and we now have in excess of 100 young persons in the group. Although we don't have anybody waiting to join a section (who is of age to join that section) we do have a substantial number of youngsters waiting to join beavers once they are of the age to do so. So the future looks very good. At the same time the number of leaders has shown a small increase but some of these are at university so are only available when down from Uni. One or two sections could definitely benefit from extra help, so if anyone can spare that mythical hour a week then please let me know. Just to set the myth right it is as much as you want to give but it is about 90 minutes per week (the length of a section meeting).

The Scout Association, now to be known as The Scouts, is coming to the end of their latest five year plan (ending at the end of 2025) and there are challenging times ahead. For example:

- There is a new digital membership tool on the horizon. It is currently being tested in a number of areas. It is claimed that it will make leader's lives easier with everything under one programme, it will replace the discredited Compass system. It does mean that we will need reliable Wi-Fi in this building. Parents will, as with Compass, have access to their child's records .
- Training is changing and future leaders will have the choice whether or not to complete the wood badge. Some modules will continue to be mandatory, The

Safeguarding and Safety modules are being strengthened and made more robust. Some of this was planned but the tragic events five years ago on the Great Orme resulting in an explorer losing his life and the resulting inquest has placed training in the spotlight.

- Risk Assessments now drive everything we do, it would be very foolish of me to say that we are fully compliant at all times but what I can say is that everything we do is risk assessed and that assessment is recorded and available for scrutiny. For example when we go to summer camp everything we do during that week is risk assessed from the moment they step on the mini buses in Nantwich to the moment they get back to Crewe a week later. The same applies to Beavers for example on a nature walk in Bluebell Woods on a section evening or cubs at Forest camp site for a weekend camp.
- You may have seen some name changes of roles in scouting. We are all volunteers but the powers that be think that this should be reinforced so I should be referred to as a Group lead volunteer others are Beaver lead volunteer etc or section volunteers. This has not been greeted with universal acclaim.
- A big change which is just under way in which the group is administered. A few years ago we had a parents committee to do this, that was changed to a group executive that has now become the Group Trustees Board with the emphasis on governance. The changes have come as a result of comments by the Charity Commission and the size of the Board has been reduced to between 8 and 12 in number. Wistaston Scouts has always had a strong and active team unlike a number of groups in the district who struggle to recruit adults to their boards. Having said that we would welcome one or two more adults willing to help with the governance of the group.
- One more point worth noting is that there is (another) uniform review under way, what that will result in is anyone's guess at the moment.

I have previously spoken about our young leader programme where youth members aged 14 to 18 years assist with one of the sections as well as having the option of attending Explorers. This programme which is administered by Di Blurton from District continues to pay dividends. Once they reach 18 years of age, they can apply to become adult leaders, most of our young leaders do go on to become adult leaders. So the young leader

programme continues to provide new leaders for the group.

Scouting within the group has, as ever, been great fun with a lot of our youngster achieving the top awards in their sections with:

20 Chief Scouts Bronze Awards (Beavers)

1 Chief Scouts Silver Award (Cubs)

8 Chief Scouts Gold Awards (Scouts)

Being awarded in 2023

In addition and totally out of the blue I was awarded the MBE in the 2023 Kings Birthday Honours. I was amazed, dumbstruck and very, very humbled by this. I mention it in this report because having read the citation this is as much a tribute to the leaders past and present who I have worked with over the last 17 years as it is for me. I was invested into the order at Windsor Castle in February 2024 by HRH Prince of Wales (more of that in the 2024 report). So like Emily Edge who as a Cub met the future Queen a couple of years ago on behalf of scouting and this group, I have now met and shaken hands with the future King what next for the Group?

We are one of only a few groups in the District who can lay claim to holding traditional camps under canvas. That means that once they reach scouts they do everything as a patrol; they pitch their own tents sort their own fires and cook their own meals truly gaining skills for life. There is always a leader in the background monitoring progress and giving guidance where necessary. Added to that scouts have a week long summer camp and have done so for many years (missing out during the pandemic). 2023 saw them using a new (to us) site on Anglesey and a great time was had by all. The highlight for most was a trip to RAF Valley which had been arranged by Phil Spencer who was group chair at the time and had one or two connections in the RAF. The youngsters got to see the working base, sit in a helicopter and generally have a great time. Sadly there was no fixed wing flying whilst they were there so I guess we will have to go back again in 2027.

Once again, the group is grateful for the continued support from the Parish Council. As ever they made the offer of funding towards equipment. In 2023/24 they met half of the cost of a heavy duty Gazebo replacing the old one which has given 15 years service.

Finally I must pay a huge thankyou to our leaders (including our young leaders) and group trustees for the amazing work they have done to provide scouting during 2023. When thanking the adult leaders I must include their wives, husbands, partners, girlfriends and boyfriends (I believe in sporting circles they are known as WAGS and HABS) for their continued support. Without their assistance we could not provide the quality scouting to our young people which they receive in Wistaston Scouts.

August 2024

John Bennett MBE

Group Lead Volunteer (Group Scout Leader)

07825 091114,

gsl@wistastonscoutgroup.co.uk

SURPLUS AND LOSS ACCOUNT - 2023 Year To Date

INCOME

Subs

Current Year - 2023	£	12,528.00	
Previous Year - 2022	£	-	£ 12,528.00

Fundraising Etc.

Fundraising	£	3,524.23	
Donations	£	950.00	
Grants	£	-	£ 4,474.23

Miscellaneous

Gift Aid	£	-	
Camps & Activities		11776.24	
Floats/Cashing Cheques	£	-	
Interest	£	-	
Explorer Rent	£	-	
Centre Hire Income	£	940.00	
Other	£	814.33	£ 13,530.57

New HQ Funding		£	-
-----------------------	--	----------	----------

£ 30,532.80

Transfers between accounts (Excluded from Income/expenditure)

Moving from

Natwest Main Account	130.00
Natwest Activities account	2500.00
OSM Payment Cards	0.00

Moving To

Natwest Main Account	0
Natwest Activities account	130.00
OSM Payment Cards	2500.00
Transfer balance	0.00

TOTAL Income	£ 30,532.80
---------------------	--------------------

Opening Balances 01/01/2023

Cash	£	-
Natwest Main Account	£	26,215.50
Natwest Activities account	£	4,838.44
OSM Payment Cards	£	5,114.27
Unbanked Cheques	£	-
Assets		
Liabilities	£	-
Total	£	36,168.21

EXPENDITURE

Utilities

Electricity	£	894.00	
Water	£	373.70	
Gas	£	696.40	
Phone/Broadband	£	480.00	£ 2,444.10

General

Training	£	-	
Insurance	£	1,586.79	
Capitation	£	5,605.50	
Subs Expenditure	£	146.61	
Hygiene services	£	101.40	
HQ Expenditure	£	1,386.18	£ 8,826.48

Equipment

Scout & Guide Shop	£	673.79	
Camping Gas	£	-	
General	£	306.00	£ 979.79

Sectional Expenses	£	875.23
---------------------------	---	--------

Floats/Cashing Cheques	£	-
-------------------------------	---	---

Fundraising Expenditure	£	495.98
--------------------------------	---	--------

Camp & Activity Expenditure	£	13,169.93
--	---	-----------

Gifts	£	-
--------------	---	---

Other	£	130.00
--------------	---	--------

New Equipment Expenditure	£	-
----------------------------------	---	---

£ 26,921.51

Net Surplus	£	3,611.29
-------------	----------	-----------------

£ 30,532.80

Current Balance

Cash	£	-
Natwest Main Account	£	30,791.37
Natwest Activities account	£	6,454.29
OSM Payment Cards	£	2,533.84
Unbanked Cheques	£	-
Assets	£	-
Liabilities	£	-
Total	£	39,779.50

Independent Examiner's Report to the Trustees of the

3544

.....SCOUT GROUP/DISTRICT/COUNTY/AREA SCOUT COUNCIL

I report on the accounts of the Group/District/County/Area for the year ended 31/12/2023.....

which comprise the Statement of Financial Activities, the Balance Sheet and related notes set out on pages.....

This report is made solely to the trustees in accordance with Section 145 of the Charities Act 2011. My work has been undertaken so that I might state to the charity's trustees those matters I am required to state to them in an Independent Examiner's report and for no other purpose. To the fullest extent permitted by law, I do not accept or assume responsibility to anyone other than the charity and the charity's trustees for my examination work.

Respective responsibilities of Trustees and Examiner

The Group's/District's trustees are responsible for the preparation of the accounts. They consider that an audit is not required for this year (under Section 144 of the Charities Act 2011 (the Charities Act)) and that an independent examination is needed.

It is my responsibility to:

- Examine the accounts (under Section 145 of the Charities Act);
- To follow the procedures laid down in the General Directions given by the Charity Commissioners (under Section 145(5)(b) of the Charities Act); and
- To state whether particular matters have come to my attention.

Basis of Independent Examiner's report

My examination was carried out in accordance with the General Directions given by the Charity Commissioners. An examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the Group/District and a comparison of the accounts presented with those records. It also includes consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts, and seeking explanations from you as trustees concerning any such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in an audit, and consequently no opinion is given as to whether the accounts present a 'true and fair' view and the report is limited to those matters set out in the statement below.

Independent Examiner's statement

In connection with my examination, no matter has come to my attention (other than that disclosed below *):

1. which gives me reasonable cause to believe that in any material respect the requirements
 - to keep accounting records in accordance with Section 130 of the Charities Act ;and
 - to prepare accounts which accord with the accounting records and comply with the accounting requirements of the Charities Acthave not been met; or
2. to which, in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

* Please delete the words in the brackets if they do not apply

Name: Simon Prestage.....

Qualification:

Address: 53 SANDYLANDS PARK.....

WISHTON CBWA.....

Date: 15/8/2024.....