



Public Benefit Report

30th East Belfast Scout Group (NIC 103844)

Trustees' Annual Report 1st January — 31st December 2023

Address

Gilnahirk Presbyterian Church, 161 Gilnahirk Road, Belfast BT5 7QP

Our purposes

The purpose of Scouting is to actively engage and support young people in their personal development as individuals and as responsible citizens, empowering them to make a positive contribution to society and develop skills for life.

Our beneficiaries

Our principal beneficiaries are children and young people, mainly, but not restricted to those who are resident in Gilnahirk, East Belfast, but the benefit can extend to society more generally through the Scout Group's positive contribution to our local community. The Scout Group has a current youth membership of over 100, spanning Squirrel Scouts, Beaver Scouts, Cub Scouts, Scouts and Explorer Scouts, supported by an adult volunteer leadership of 16 (and 7 explorer scout young leaders).

Public benefit arising from activities

We have continued to engage in an age-appropriate, varied and balanced programme during 2023 to support the physical, intellectual, social and spiritual development of our young people. The Squirrels and Beavers had a mix of craft and games, storytelling, unihoc, kickboxing, Coronation, Hallowe'en and Christmas Parties, an army-themed night, tent-pitching, made s'mores and planted bulbs, cycled to CS Lewis Square, and celebrated Pancake Tuesday by making their own pancakes. For the Cubs, outdoor activities included orienteering, athletics, cycling, caving, crate stacking, hiking, shelter building, paddleboarding, high ropes, Trangia and campfire cooking, wide games and incident hikes. Indoors, the Cubs enjoyed martial arts, salsa dancing, dog obedience training, quizzes, junk craft, DJ workshop and themed-nights (Australian, Chinese, French Resistance, Ancient Egypt, Cluedo) and visits from Sons of Ivar Viking Reenactment Club, RNID and BugLife NI. There were also visits to the cinema, Belvoir Forest, Belfast City Airport Fire and Rescue Station, an alpaca farm and chocolate factory. There were opportunities to complete badges including personal safety, home safety, road safety, scientist, gardener, nature and environmental conservation. Scouts enjoyed a lot of outdoor activities including geocaching, cricket, hiking, swimming, cycling, football and karting; indoors activities included volleyball, wood whittling, pumpkin carving and cooking. Activities for the Explorer Scouts included sea

kayaking, hydrobikes, tenpin bowling, escape room, boulder world, clay pigeon shooting, scuba diving, and a cooking competition. The response from the young people and their parents has been very positive throughout the year and is evident judging by seeing all the fun and enjoyment the children are having.

At District and County level the Cub Scouts participated in the District Unihoc, County Flag and Cooking competitions. Such activities not only support the personal development of our members but have also provided opportunities for them to interact with young people from other parts of Belfast. Development of values and beliefs has been nurtured through participation in closing prayers at the end of each meeting. There were opportunities to attend uniformed youth organisation Parades and Services within our own Church and to help to lead prayers, readings or dramas at our Scouts' Own Services at camps. The Cub Scouts also made Christmas craft to give to elderly members of our congregation. The Scouts and Explorer Scouts assisted with the Poppy Appeal collection and attended the Remembrance Parade and outdoor Church Service again this year and their support was particularly appreciated by Royal British Legion as many members of the local branch were still shielding and unable to collect. Across the sections, more than 700 Scout activity and challenge badges were still earned by our members in 2023, including a number of Chief Scout's Awards in each Section. Many of these badges have helped to equip our members to enable them to play a positive part in their local community.

We organised a joint week-long summer camp in Chorley, Lancashire for the Cubs and Scouts in August 2023, which some of the Explorer Scouts also attended. Activities included tree climbing, rafting, sailing, abseiling, gorge walking, cave bus, pyrography, canoeing, zipwire and laser combat. We visited the Bee Centre, Ninja Warrior, Manchester Police Museum and Blackpool Pleasure Park.

The Cubs also held a weekend camp at Ganaway Activity Centre and a sleepover in the church hall. The Scouts spent a weekend at Slievenaman schoolhouse in the Mourne, while the senior Cubs and the Explorers spent separate weekends at Mourneshore cottage in Ballymartin during the year. The senior Cubs also built survival shelters and slept out overnight at the Mountstewart Estate. Provision of such experiences makes a significant contribution to the personal development of our young people, helping them become more independent and self-reliant within a safe learning environment.

In addition to their own sectional programme, our Explorer Scouts are encouraged and empowered to make a positive contribution to society through their active participation as valued members of the leadership teams working with the younger sections of the Scout Group and several have embarked on the young leader training programme. Their support in helping to deliver a varied programme of indoor and outdoor activities for our Squirrels, Beavers and Cub Scouts and their assistance at camps was particularly appreciated.

Mitigation from harm

There is no harm arising from our purposes. Scouting operates within a framework of safety to enable young people to take part in adventurous activities safely. Risk assessments are

carried out for all programmed activities. Adventurous activities are undertaken only under strict supervision by those with appropriate qualifications and authorisation. All of our adult volunteers have undergone ACCESSNI advanced vetting and complete mandatory induction, safe-guarding, safety and first aid training.

Private benefit

The only private benefit from our purpose is that adult volunteers are trained to deliver the programme but this is incidental and necessary because it is needed to operate in today's society working with young people. Several of our leadership are currently completing formal 'Woodbadge' training (and two have recently completed) and others have undertaken or revalidated safe-guarding, safety and first aid training during 2023.

Regard to the Commission's Guidance

In setting our objectives and planning our activities during 2023 at all times the Trustees have had due regard and careful consideration to the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland's guidance on public benefit to ensure that the activities have helped to achieve the charity's purposes and provide a benefit to the beneficiaries. We were also mindful of NI Executive and Educational Authority Guidance when undertaking risk assessments for face to face activities during the pandemic.

Financial position at 31st December 2023

The Scout Group's main bank account is held in the name of 30th East Belfast Scout Group. External grants, for example from the Education Authority (to Gilnahirk Youth Council), Belfast City Council and the Gift Aid rebate are paid into this account together with income from any Group fundraising activities. Monies are dispersed regularly in the form of grants and subsidies to support the work of the individual Sections of our Scout Group, occasional special events and incidental expenses and to offset the costs of the activities of our Explorer unit, in recognition of the valued contribution members of this Unit make as young leaders working with the younger sections. The Group Account currently has a healthy balance, largely due to a generous bequest to the Group several years ago from the Estate of our late President, Audrey Beggs. However during the current financial year we continued to subsidise activities from our own reserves: expenditure included costs associated with our Group Summer Camp in Chorley, resulting in a deficit of - £601.57 for the year ending December 2023 compared to the previous year.

The Squirrel, Beaver, Cub Scout and Scout Sections each also have their own unique bank accounts. Sectional membership fees, camp fees, fundraising and transfer of approved funds from the Scout Group account are the main monies paid into these accounts. Major items of recurring sectional expenditure include payment of capitation fees to National Headquarters, purchase of badges, programme materials, competition entry fees, and fees for instructor-led adventurous activities and workshops, residential experiences and camps. Each of the sectional accounts is currently in credit. The Squirrel account had a deficit of -£225.68 for the year ending December 2023, the Beaver Scout account had a surplus of £1271.07, while the Cub Scout account had a small surplus of £83.32, and the Scout Troop account a surplus of +£1288.81 relative to the previous financial year. Consolidating the five

accounts, there is a surplus of +£1815.95 for the year ending 31st December 2023. Fundraising, promotion of the Gift Aid Scheme and submission of grant applications will continue to be a priority for all Sections in 2024.

How the charity is constituted and governed


The Scout Group is governed under the terms of the Royal Charter issued to, and the policies, organisation and rules pertaining, to the Scout Association in the United Kingdom. Locally, the 30th East Belfast Scout Group is represented on and responsible to East Belfast District Scout Council, Belfast County Scout Council and Northern Ireland Scout Council which ratifies appointment of adult leaders and oversees provision of leader training. As an open sponsored group, we are also responsible to our own sponsoring authority, the Kirk Session of Gilnahirk Presbyterian Church.

Under the rules of the Scout Association, a properly constituted Group Executive Committee has been established, and meets formally at least twice per year, in addition to the Group's Annual General Meeting. The Group Executive Committee includes representation from amongst the leadership of each section of the Scout Group, parents, youth leadership and the Kirk Session of our sponsoring authority. The Group Executive Committee nominates representatives to attend the Gilnahirk Youth Council and is responsible for the appointment of the Group Chairman, Secretary and Treasurer and drafting of annual reports, financial statements and approval of expenditure. The members of the Group Executive Committee and Trustees of the Group are appointed at the AGM.

Trustees

Dr David Bell, Mr David Hawthorne, Mrs Elizabeth Robb, Mrs Lorna Thompson, Mrs Carol Chambers

The above report was approved by the Group Executive Committee, ratified at the Annual General Meeting on 19th March 2024 and signed on behalf of the Trustees by:



Dr David Bell
Group Scout Leader, Trustee