



Public Benefit Report

30th East Belfast Scout Group (NIC 103844)

Trustees' Annual Report 1st January — 31st December 2024

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 15 (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 2024 to support the physical, intellectual, social and spiritual development of our young people. 2024 was a particularly special year as we celebrated our 70th anniversary, with a sleepover and breakfast in the Church Halls, Open Day and Parade and Thanksgiving Service. During the year the Squirrels and Beavers have had a mix of drama, storytelling, noisy games, craft and cooking, parties and a snowball fight. For the Cubs outdoor activities included fire lighting, campfire, backwoods and Trangia cooking, caving, bouldering, archery, canoeing, hiking, rafting, hydro-bikes, go-karting, slippery slope, high ropes, bubble football and laser tag. Indoors, the Cubs enjoyed art and drama workshops, first aid with QUB medical students, puppet plays, science experiments, basketball and dodgeball, water polo, swimming, map-reading, pioneering and handbell ringing. There were also themed nights (Space, Columbian, Italian and African) and visits to Clip n Climb, Ards Model Flying Club, Belfast Activity Centre, QUB Centre for Biomedical Sciences Education, Armagh Planetarium and the Somme Museum, and from NI Bat Group and Wee Critters. Scouts enjoyed a lot of outdoor activities including geocaching, cricket, hiking, swimming, cycling, football and karting; indoors activities included volleyball, wood whittling, pioneering, pumpkin carving, water purification and cooking. Activities for the Explorer Scouts included escape rooms, basketball, pottery, hiking, abseiling, rampage mud-run, climbing, archery, axe throwing, mini-golf, bowling, a

cooking competition and Christmas Dinner and short trips to Glasgow and to the Mournes. 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.

There were opportunities to participate in events and competitions organised at District, County and Northern Ireland level with the Beavers taking part in uni-hoc, Cub Scouts in a quiz, swimming gala, football and cross-country race, the Scouts in a Monopoly Run and the Explorers in a volleyball tournament. 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 and throughout Northern Ireland. Development of values and beliefs has been nurtured through participation in closing prayers at the end of each meeting and through attendance at uniformed youth organisation Services in our own Church. 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. They also helped out with some of the stalls at the Church Christmas Fayre. The Explorers participated in The Holocaust Memorial Day Trust commemoration at Belfast City Hall. Across the sections, more than 750 Scout activity and challenge badges were earned by our members in 2024, 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 the Cavan/Monaghan region for the Cubs and Scouts in August 2024, which some of the Explorer Scouts also attended. Activities included hiking, paddleboarding, go-karting, rafting, bouldering, rock climbing, laser-tag, water park, campfire cooking competition and a visit to the Tayto Factory. The Cubs also held a weekend camp at Gosford Forest Park in March and at Mourneshore in Kilkeel in October, while the Scouts spent a winter weekend at Slievenaman Schoolhouse in the Mournes in February. A highlight for the members of the Explorer Unit was a 15-day trip to Bosnia and Hercegovina in July 2024. This included two voluntary service projects, one with Camp Emek Beraka and one with Pegasos Riding for the Disabled, a two-day 90 kilometre white water rafting expedition along the Tara River, hiking through Sutjeska National Park, a visit to Srebrenica UN Compound and genocide memorial at Potocari and to Tito's Nuclear Bunker near Konjic, sightseeing in Mostar and Sarajevo, and tours of the walled settlement at Pocitelj, the monastery at Dervish Tekke and the medieval tombstones of the Radimlja necropolis. A highlight of our last day was a swim in the majestic Kravica Falls. Provision of all these residential and camping experiences makes a significant contribution to the personal development of our young people across the sections, 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 now completed the young leader training scheme. Several members of the Explorer Unit have also completed Duke of Edinburgh Bronze or Silver Awards or Chief Scout's Diamond or Platinum Awards in the last twelve months. Their support in helping to

deliver a varied programme of indoor and outdoor activities for our Squirrels, Beavers and Cub Scouts and assistance at camps is 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 2024.

Regard to the Commission's Guidance

In setting our objectives and planning our activities during 2024 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.

Financial position at 31st December 2024

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 (to the Scout Group) 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 in 2012 from the Estate of our late President, Audrey Beggs. During the current financial year major expenditure included costs associated with our 70th Anniversary, Group Summer Camp in Cavan, and Explorer Scout Trip to Bosnia and Hercegovina. Successful grant applications and a significant focused fundraising effort ensured that these events were cost neutral, resulting in a small surplus of + £1094.08 for the year ending December 2024 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 small deficit of -£44.51

for the year ending December 2024, the Beaver Scout account had a deficit of -£136.39, while the Cub Scout account had a surplus of + £687.97 and the Scout Troop account a surplus of +£820.18 relative to the previous financial year. Consolidating the five accounts, there is a surplus of +£2421.33 for the year ending 31st December 2024, demonstrating a reversal of the deficit recorded in the previous financial year. Fundraising, promotion of the Gift Aid Scheme and submission of grant applications will continue to be a priority for all Sections in the year ahead to enable us to offer an exciting and varied programme in 2025.

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. In accordance with our sponsorship agreement, were the Scout Group to close in future, any residual monies in our accounts would transfer to Gilnahirk Youth Council, to support other aspects of ongoing youth provision within the Church congregation. Under the rules of the Scout Association, a properly constituted Group Trustee Board has been established, and meets formally at least twice per year, in addition to the Group's Annual General Meeting. The Group Trustee Board 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 Trustee Board 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 Trustee Board are appointed at the Group's AGM.

Trustees

Dr David Bell, Mr David Hawthorne, Mrs Elizabeth Robb, Mrs Lorna Thompson, Mrs Alison Moss, Mrs Donna Hawthorne.

The above report was approved by the Group Trustee Board, ratified at the Annual General Meeting on 29th April 2025 and signed on behalf of the Trustees by:



Dr David Bell
Group Lead Volunteer, Trustee