

First Roe Valley Scout Group

Registered Charity Number 104214

Trustees' Annual Report

1st April 2024 to 31st March 2025

Objectives and Activities

The purpose of First Roe Valley Scout Group is to actively engage and support young people in their personal development, empowering them to make a positive contribution to society. The Group delivers a balanced programme of activities designed to develop skills for life, including teamwork, leadership, resilience, and community awareness.

Following a period of inactivity due to a lack of leadership volunteers, the Group's primary objective during this reporting period was to assess the viability of re-establishing Scouting provision within the local community and to relaunch the Group.

Activities and Achievements

A four-week pilot programme was delivered by the Strategic Growth and Development Officer from Scouts NI to assess community interest. The response was very positive, with young people aged 4 to 11 years engaging in the programme. Average weekly attendance during the pilot was approximately 46 young people, supported by 8 prospective volunteers.

The pilot programme offered a wide range of activities, including creative crafts, paper aeroplane building, outdoor learning through woodland scavenger hunts, environmental activities such as planting bulbs, and concluded with an Olympic-style event involving both young people and parents. The success of the pilot demonstrated strong community demand for the return of Scouting.

Following this, the Group paused over the summer period to prepare for a structured relaunch. This allowed time for:

- Volunteer recruitment and onboarding
- Completion of safeguarding checks and mandatory training
- Establishment of initial governance structures
- Registration processes to ensure safe volunteer-to-young person ratios

The Group recommenced regular meetings on 10 September.

At the time of the annual census on 31 January 2025, there were 26 young people registered. While initial numbers were higher during the pilot phase, this reduction reflects the introduction of membership fees and uniform costs as part of the formal relaunch.

The Group successfully established four active sections:

- Squirrels (ages 4–6) – newly introduced provision
- Beavers
- Cubs
- Scouts

The introduction of the Squirrel Drey represents a significant development, providing early years engagement for the first time and supporting good sustainability.

Young people participated in a varied programme throughout the year, including:

- Creative and science-based activities (e.g. rocket building and experiments)
- Outdoor and environmental learning
- Communication and teamwork skills development
- Community engagement, including Christmas events and local celebrations
- Campfire activities, fire lighting, and outdoor cooking

The Group also relocated its meeting place from Aghanloo Community Centre to Christ Church Hall, Limavady, providing a more suitable and sustainable venue for ongoing activities.

Public Benefit

The Trustees confirm that they have complied with their duty to have due regard to the Charity Commission's guidance on public benefit.

The Group provides clear public benefit by offering structured, inclusive activities that support the personal development of young people. Through participation in Scouting, young people develop confidence, teamwork, and leadership skills, while also contributing positively to their local community.

The re-establishment of the Group has ensured that young people in the Roe Valley area once again have access to these opportunities.

Financial Review

The initial pilot programme did not incur any cost to the Group, as all associated expenses were covered by Scouts NI as part of its development support.

Following the relaunch, the Group began operating on a standard financial basis, including the collection of membership fees. However, during the reporting period, the Group experienced challenges associated with the transition from the previous structure, particularly in relation to accessing the Group's bank account.

As a result, and as reflected in the financial statements, the only transactions recorded for the period from 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2025 were bank charges and the payment of membership fees to Scouts UK.

Work has been undertaken, with support from the District, to resolve these issues and to re-establish appropriate financial controls and access arrangements.

Governance and Structure

The re-establishment of the Group required the development of new governance arrangements.

Due to no volunteers from the previous leadership team remaining, there were initial difficulties in accessing and managing the Group's bank account and financial records. Significant effort has been made to address these issues and to bring governance arrangements in line with required standards.

The District Lead Volunteer has provided direct support to assist with:

- Re-establishing financial controls
- Supporting compliance with Charity Commission requirements
- Initial steps in the formation of a new Group Trustee Board

Work is ongoing to ensure that:

- All Trustee roles are appropriately filled
- Governance processes are fully compliant
- Financial management is robust and transparent

The Trustees are committed to strengthening governance arrangements to ensure the long-term sustainability and compliance of the Group.

Future Plans

The Group's focus for the coming year is to:

- Continue to grow youth membership in a sustainable way
- Further develop and support the volunteer team
- Strengthen governance and financial management processes
- Embed the Squirrel section and support progression through all sections
- Deliver a high-quality, balanced programme for all young people

The Trustees are confident that the Group have a better sustainable footing, with good community interest and a dedicated volunteer base.

Trustees' Responsibilities Statement

The Trustees are responsible for preparing the Trustees' Annual Report and financial statements.

They are responsible for ensuring that the Group:

- Keeps proper accounting records
- Safeguards its assets
- Operates in accordance with its charitable purposes
- Complies with relevant legislation and regulatory requirements

The Trustees confirm that they have taken appropriate steps to ensure that these responsibilities are met.