

## ESSEX COUNTY SCOUT COUNCIL Annual General Meeting

Tuesday 10 September 2024 @ 19:30hrs

Location: Skreens Park Activity Centre, Skreens Park Road, Roxwell, Essex CM1 4NL

### Participating

Paul Stennett                  County Chairman

Bob Bye                        County Lead Volunteer

Members of the County Executive for the year 2023/2024 as appointed 2023 AGM

### In attendance

President                      Lord Petre

Councillors                  David Hurst, High Sherriff

Mark Huxley, High Sherriff Consort

Cllr John Driver, Deputy Mayor Maldon

Members of the Essex County Scout Council (Appendix)

**County President** opened the meeting at 7:30pm announced Health & Safety and domestic announcements for the evening.

### 1) Opening Thoughts were provided by the County Secretary

Good evening to our honoured guests, scouting colleagues, friends and neighbours. Scouting has seen a number of changes over the past few years and more is to come. We have a new Chief Scout, Dwayne Fields, adventurer and TV presenter. Dwyne is out 11<sup>th</sup> Chief Scout to lead out half a million young people, and adult volunteers for his values, commitment to help young people and outstanding leadership qualities. We are working through transformation of Scouting, with new structures, rules and ways of supporting. Of course, you know this as you live it every day. Scouts helps young persons learn skills for life and gain confidence and develop the desire to make their world a better place.

From our founder "leave this world a little better than you found it nobody is too small to do a good turn, even if its only to smile", so please before we formally open our meeting turn behind you or to the side smile at the person there and say "cheese",

### 2) Introduction and welcome

#### County President

Warm welcome to all Members of the County Scout Council and Guests especially delighted to have David Hurst our High Sherrif, plus our attending Council Mayors, including members of the County Scout Council and guests.

### 3) **Apologies for absence**

Adrian Slim

Ian Scott

John Dell

Jess McDonald

Emma Dell

### 4) **Review of the previous year**

#### a) **Receive and consider the Annual Report of the County Trustee Board including the annual Statement of Accounts**

##### **County Chairman's Review of the previous year.**

It's great to see so many of you joining us this evening and I thank you for supporting Essex Scouts in in whatever way it is. In particular, I would like to extend a warm welcome to our special guests namely the High Sheriff of Essex together with the mayor's chief executives of various councils' representatives and other organisations and members of the scout council.

The annual report contains a review of the year from the county's trustee board as well as the financial and governance bits that we as trustees are obliged to publish to meet the requirements of the Charity Commission a copy of the annual report should be on your seat and you'll be able to access and download it via the Essex scout's website shortly.

Please feel free to share the report with others who aren't able to attend this evening once you've read it so that they can learn about the great work undertaken by Essex Scouts. As usual, the report only scratches the surface as to what's been achieved during the past year within the county.

##### **Royal duties**

Immediately prior to our 2023 AGM the nation and our movement took the opportunity to mark the coronation of King Charles III. As a county we were honoured to be asked by headquarters to forward details of Queen Scout Award holders who attained their award in the last three years and were under 25, to help steward at the King's Coronation on the 6th of May 2023. Essex Scouts eventually sent 3 representatives to act as stewards on the day. It was a great honour for the county to be able to support such a major national event with the scouts being the only uniformed organisation asked to undertake such duties.

##### **Large Events**

This year also saw the continuation of us running several large events, building on the success of previous years, which I know were enjoyed by all those who participated.

We saw the County Backpack event, a scout Section 2-day incident hike, with 500 scouts, adult leaders and young leaders taking part over a weekend.

The Essex weekend, an event open to volunteers, their families, friends and teams from across Essex Scouts, which saw 450 people come together to experience new activities and socialise without the young people.

The County Marathon, a 2-day incident hike event for all Explorer Scouts, Network and Leaders was held in the New Forest, with over 40 teams participating.

The Essex 2023 (Essex Scouts Expeditions 2023) initiative saw nearly 270 young people and leaders attending 3 international events in the summer of 2023.

We had 90 people plus 10 leaders attending the 25th World Scout Jamboree in South Korea and will shortly hear more from some of those who attended.

A trip to North America was undertaken by 100 young people and 24 leaders, with them undertaking what the Boy Scouts of America termed high adventure and 32 young people plus 8 leaders went camping in Jersey.

Each of these groups has their own story to tell about their adventures and experiences which they will remember for the rest of their lives. Our thanks go to the respective county teams for their work in ensuring successful running of these events.

## **EIJ 2024**

When talking about large events, whilst not part of last financial year, I couldn't fail to mention Essex International Jamboree which ran recently between 27th of July to the 3rd of August 2024, with the last Jamboree being run in 2016. The event saw c8,500 people attend, whether that be young people, leaders or staff, for what was a very successful week in a field. We were blessed with very good weather, possibly too hot at times and we were lucky to have a visit from Dwayne Fields who this week has been appointed as a new Chief Scout, together with Carl Hankinson our UK Chief Volunteer.

The Jamboree is a truly international event with over 40 countries represented, including groups from the Ukraine and Kenya. It's an unforgettable experience for those attending, providing Skills for Life, building new friendships and memories to last a lifetime.

Planning for the Jamboree has been going on since we had to cancel the 2020 event, with the Scout and Guide Trustees receiving regular updates from the Jamboree Executive Team as to progress with their planning and the final decision by the Trustees to proceed not being made until December 2023.

Having signed up as part of the staff team, I was honoured to be part of the Facilities team, some of whom would have been on site for a month by the end of the event, with the team working tirelessly to get the site ready for this amazing event. Together, we created a vibrant village which is one of the biggest in Essex and the largest Scout and Guide event in Europe this summer.

As Paul and Karen our joint Jack Camp Chiefs say, one thing to remember is that Jamboree is run 100% by volunteers who are 100% professional on zero pay; how true that is and what an amazing team they are. My thanks go to Paul Walker and Karen Packer, together with the Jamboree Executive Team for their hard work and dedication in managing and organising the event.

## **Skreens Park Activity Centre**

Skreens Park continues to see increased demand from Scouts, Guides, Duke of Edinburgh Groups, Schools (including those with additional needs students) and corporate customers, as well as there being an increasing use of activities by the public, which is great to see.

Pat Bailey and her staff team work hard to accommodate and support the multiple booking requests received, with it pleasing that their efforts resulted in the site making a surplus during the year, which ensures that it is not a financial burden on the County.

It is great to see favourable feedback that is received regularly from users of the site and shows the professionalism of our staff team, with a couple of examples being shown on the screen.

During the year the site has ran Archery and NRSA instructor courses, First Aid training and Tomahawk courses, which have been open to youth leaders from other organisations which are members of ECVYS, the Essex Council for voluntary Youth Services.

Several notable projects have been undertaken during the year by a volunteer team who have collectively provided around 600 volunteer hours. These include the completion of a hammock village, refurbishment of the shooting range, construction of a bridge to access the backwoods area and tree planting.

As part of the site's ongoing development, we have started a project to upgrade the power on the site, with us currently waiting to hear from UK Power Networks as to when this will be delivered. We were also able to bring fibre broadband to the site during the year to replace the old satellite link, with us taking the opportunity to upgrade the site's Wi-Fi and phone system.

As part of our programme of ongoing renewal and replacement at the site, we have seen various items of activity equipment purchased during the year. We also took the opportunity to replace the sites 30-year-old tractor which is used to cut the grass, providing improved reliability and operator comfort (which I am personally grateful for !).

The volunteer team at Skreens Park continues to grow and provides tireless support through grass cutting maintenance and the development of new projects, with several work weekends undertaken during the year and my thanks go to all those volunteers who commit their time and energy in maintaining and enhancing the facilities at the Activity Centre.

We continue to be able to offer a range of activities that are diverse challenging and suitable for all ages abilities and skill ranges, which supports our aim of providing a premier outdoor campsite and adventure facility for members of scouting across Essex as well as nationally and internationally.

### **Skreens Park Activity Centre Planning**

The Warren building was erected in 1981, being a second-hand site hut bought from Wernicks, a portable building manufacturer. It has served us well over the years, but is now beyond economical repair and is not being used. The Trustee Board has agreed to proceed with the replacement of the building and so, in the last year, we have obtained planning permission for the replacement Warren building, which is a mirror of the Leaman building in terms of design, albeit slightly bigger in size. Detailed plans have been produced which are displayed on the screen, with them currently awaiting building regulation approval whilst, simultaneously, we have gone out to tender for the construction work, with a decision expected to select a contractor later this month. It is hoped it will be able to proceed with the construction during the current financial year.

In addition to the Warren building, we have also obtained planning approval for the construction of a new workshop and maintenance area and storage barn at the site, to store the sites machinery and equipment (which is currently housed in the activity barn and various containers around the site) with detailed design drawings currently being produced. Again the plans of this are on the screen.

For both of these projects is coming 100% from grant funding, primarily from the Norman Garon Trust, together with some generous legacies that we have been left.

Finally, I would like to say a huge thank you to the Skreens Park team for their continued hard work in ensuring that the activity centre operates as smoothly as possible. In particular I would like to thank Paul Walker and Neil Bleakley, together the rest of the management committee in managing the site and the paid staff team, led by Pat Bailey, for their continued understanding, patience, hard work, dedication and commitment over the last 12 months. I know they work long hours and their perseverance and dedication surpassed anything we could have expected - Thank you.

## **Thriftwood**

Bill Marshall's CHAPS team have had another busy year undertaking work at Thriftwood, with them giving 1,135 hours of service and completing over 149 separate pieces of work - a truly amazing effort.

The work undertaken ranges from general maintenance through, to larger projects including welding broken skid chairs, fitting the (last) two double glazed windows into the kitchen of the main building and replacing all of the carpet tiles in the corridors of McFarland and Barcwood (a very psychedelic pattern I'm sure you'll agree).

The site also benefited from some grant funding the County received, which enabled 8 defibrillators to be installed at campsites across the wider County.

The Heritage Team, under Bill's leadership, continued their work in creating a new County Heritage Centre, so that we can store and keep safe our County Archives and Heritage material. The centre was formally opened in May 2023 by Caroline Pantling, Head of Heritage Services at Scout Headquarters.

The trustees are grateful to the county archive team for the hours they put in ahead of the facility opening and also for the generous financial support provided by the late Malcolm Treacher, which made the whole thing possible, with archives being something that Malcolm cared about and started several years ago.

Our thanks go to the CHAPS team for the amazing amount of volunteer time they have spent at Thriftwood and also to Graham Monk as Chair of the Thriftwood Management Committee, for their management of the centre.

## **Finances**

The year 2023/24 saw us again set a negative budget, whilst holding the membership fee at the previous level. As a County, one of the trustees key priorities is that we remain financially strong to be able to support our own activities but also are ready to provide support to Groups and individuals going forward, as required.

As a county, we continue to be extremely fortunate in benefiting from various forms of additional funding over and above the monies received from the annual membership fee.

In particular, the Norman Garon Charitable Trust continues to provide valuable funding to Essex Scouts, administered through the County Grants Board, as well as supporting the County Development Fund, with this money used to support scouting at all levels across the whole of Essex.

I would particularly like to mention this evening the County Support Fund that was set up by the trustees to assist our groups and individual members with the cost-of-living crisis and ensure that finance is not seen as a blocker to participating in scouting.

Support can be provided to assist with costs directly incurred by young people (for example, helping with the payment of Subs, buying uniform, travel costs to meetings, or being able to participate in events) or Districts and Groups to help with their running costs, whether that be covering volunteer expenses or help with the cost of running buildings.

To date, have only paid circa £1,600 from the fund which is disappointing particularly as I know anecdotally there's an ongoing need for this type of support, so we need to keep advertising the availability of these monies and I would, therefore, ask you to go back to your districts and groups on identify individuals or groups where financial support is required and encourage people to apply, or even apply for it on their behalf (they don't even need to know that you've done it) - we want to spend this money, but need everyone's help to do this !

Other county grants remain available and are open for applications, ranging from start-up grants for new sections, providing support for building work (which includes major repairs as well as new builds), through to the replacement of kit used for adventurous activities. There is also an amount of money to support those with additional needs.

Altogether, during the last financial year, from these funds the Grants Board allocated over £25,000 worth of grants to groups and individuals across Essex, with further commitments to pay made of over £36,000.

All grants have one key objective, which is to enhance the benefits that scouting brings to young people in Essex. Funds are available, so please encourage your groups to apply.

### **Thank You**

It just leaves me to say a big THANK YOU on behalf of the young people of Essex and the County Trustees, to the 4,700 plus dedicated volunteer leaders, helpers, supporters and administrators throughout the county who makes Scouting possible. You continue to be our most valuable asset and resource.

Without you, Essex scouting would not be the success it is – THANK YOU ALL, for your dedication, passion and commitment and long may it continue.

I therefore recommend for your approval the annual report for 2023-2024.

Thank you very much.

### **County Treasurers review of the last year (Read by the County Chairman)**

2023-2024 has been an exciting year for Essex Scouting, with the return of international trips following COVID and transformation saw a whole new change within scouting.

Census figures showed continued growth of a 2% increase in numbers of young people over previous years as we try to return to pre COVID levels, which is encouraging.

Skreens Park continues to grow and has made an in-year surplus of approximately £68,000 doubling the previous year's surplus. This reflects all of the work of the Skreens Park team who work hard to ensure that they offer a reasonably priced range of activities that enriches experiences for young people, not just those in scouting but also the wider community.

This commitment is also reflected within receipts in advance. As of 31st of March 2024, £50k had been received for bookings for April 2024 onwards with bookings having already been made up to September 2025.

The General Fund is financed via annual subscriptions and donations. We set a negative budget of -£53 K for the year and saw an actual shortfall of circa £24.5k, with the difference reflecting the time taken for the new county team structure to be completed and bedded down.

During the year interest rates rose and we took full advantage of this by opening a new fixed rate bank account. Interest earned during the year totalled c£28k with us using the money to pay for audit fees and insurance costs which ensures that membership fees are primarily used for the benefit of young people and not on administration costs.

The current financial year's budget reflects the changes made as part of Transformation, with the Trustee Board setting a negative budget of -£62.5k with the shortfall to be financed from general reserves. Notwithstanding this, the county's annual subscription was increased by £0.50 to £3.50 being the first increase in three years.

This deficit budget reflects the Trustees desire to ensure that scouting in Essex is an option for all, with the Trustees separately agreeing to fund the cost of the County's full-time Growth and Development Officer for a further two years, as a result of the previous grant funding coming to an end this summer.

This commitment to inclusivity and ensuring finances are not a barrier for scouting is also seen within the work of the County Grants Board, with grants of approximately £49K approved during the year.

The County has received generous donations throughout the year and I would like to thank everyone who donated monies and in particular the Norman Garon Trust. Using monies accumulated over recent years outside of the annual membership fee, the trustees have accumulated sufficient funds and agreed to build a replacement for the Warren building, with it expected that a final decision will be made and contractor appointed in this respect shortly.

I therefore recommend for your approval the annual counts for 2023-2024.

Please note: No vote is required, the County Scout Council only 'receives and considers' the report.

#### **b) The County Lead Volunteer's review of Scouts in the County**

Bob Bye thanked everyone for giving up another evening to attend the AGM, where we have looked back at what we have achieved in the last year, but it also gives us an opportunity to look forward. The annual report gives us the highlights of the last year, so those will not be repeated.

Scouting today is even more relevant than when our founder Lord Robert Baden Powell started his great adventure back in 1907 to give young people a purpose in life. With today's modern pressures, particularly following the pandemic, it is proven that scouting helps with mental health both for young people and adults and gives people skills both social and practical which help them later in life and particularly for our volunteers time to try something different and this is shown by our growth in Essex for the third year in a row.

Essex Scouting is again leading the way with various initiatives and working with our neighbouring counties to share ideas and best practice. In particular, our expanding EDI team, who are now working with both Kent and Greater London North scouts and Girl-Guiding, as well as the 4-13 Programme Team supporting Suffolk scouts and our Volunteering Team, especially on the learning side, supporting HQ initiatives.

It is very pleasing to note that, since the last AGM, we have had 6 King Scout Awards, with a further one awaiting approval, being the highest award that a young person can achieve. In terms of D of E, young people have received 110 bronze awards, 53 silver awards and eight gold awards across the county, on top of many other top awards earned in the various sections.

This is a testament to the hard work and enjoyable programmes put on by you all. Following on from last year when our new team structures were announced, we are now undertaking a review of these, being one year in, to see what has worked well and what changes might be needed to ensure that we learn and move forwards and provide more support for our young people and adult volunteers.

All of the things mentioned in the annual report and those I've just spoken about would not have happened without a great team behind me. There is no 'I' in team and my most grateful thanks go to my County Leadership Team and the various Team Leads and their Team Members, for all of the hard work they have done over the last year, which also extends to our district teams and no doubt will be doing for the rest of the year, particularly as we move over to our new digital system this autumn.

Essex as a County is seeing large amounts of new housing developments, enabling us to reach out to new communities and offer scouting to them. However, what's being seen is that those new communities are not being provided with the community facilities required to enable all sorts of activities to take place and I implore those honoured guests we have here tonight who can influence these matters to ensure that these are provided, as the greatest barrier that my District Leads advise me of is the lack of suitable premises to offer scouting from.

Finally, to all of our 4,700 volunteers within Essex scouts at all levels thank you for giving up those two hours a week (I am joking) to enable us to provide and support our 15,000 plus young people along the scouting journey from Squirrels to Scout Network.

## **5) Governance topics**

### **County President:**

We'll use this part of the meeting to make sure the charity's foundations are in good order.

#### **a) Approve the minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on 18 July 2023**

##### **County President:**

The County Trustee Board have reviewed the minutes of the previous AGM at their meeting held on 14 November 2023. I put forward these minutes are taken as read and ask the County Scout Council to agree they're a true record of that meeting.

Seconder      Malcolm Taylor  
Quorum        Majority of room show of hands.

#### **b) Adopt the model constitution from Policy, Organisation and Rules (POR)**

##### **County President:**

In line with the recommendation from Scout Headquarters, the County Trustee Board proposes we adopt the model constitution from Chapter 5 of Policy, Organisation and Rules. A copy of this was available for review and inspection prior to this meeting, and copies are also available at this meeting.

Seconder      Andy Daykin  
Quorum        Majority of room show of hands.

#### **c) Note the County's financial year**

##### **County President:**

Can the County Scout Council members please note our charity's financial year is 1 April to 31 March.

#### **d) Approve appointed and community members of the County Scout Council**

**County President** - the County Scout Council can admit other people to membership. The following are nominated as County Scout Council members:

To co-opt the following persons to the County Scout Council, as nominated by the County Commissioner and County Chairman:

- i) The County Commissioners for the Guide Counties of Essex North East, Essex South East and Essex West



- ii) The Youth Service Managers for Essex County Council, Southend City Council and Thurrock Borough Council

These are to be admitted as members of the County Scout Council as well as the ex officio list in POR Rule 5.6.4

Quorum            Majority of room show of hands

Please note: These nominations are to the County Scout Council (the people attending this AGM). They aren't members of the County Trustee Board. Please also note, these nominations can be by name or role.

e) **Agree the number of members that may be appointed to the Trustee Board**

**County President:**

Following good practice recommendations from the Charity Governance Code, POR states Trustee Boards should have a minimum of 5, and no more than 12, Trustees in total. This includes ex officio and co-opted Trustees.

The County Scout Council must agree the number of people to be appointed to the Trustee Board. The outgoing Trustee Board recommends that 12 people are appointed. I propose the County Scout Council approves that recommendation.

Seconder        Lisa Griffin  
Quorum         Majority of room show of hands

f) **Agree the quorum for future meetings of the County Scout Council (excluding this AGM)**

**County President:**

The County Scout Council must agree its quorum – the minimum number of County Scout Council members that must be present at County Scout Council meetings. The outgoing Trustee Board recommends the quorum should be set at 30 people. Does the County Scout Council approve that recommendation ?

Seconder        Mark Rendle  
Quorum         Majority of room show of hands

6) **Making appointments**

**County President:**

We'll use this part of the meeting to organise the set up of the charity until the next AGM. We'll appoint a Trustee Board to oversee good governance for the charity over the next year.

a) **Appoint the County Chair, following recommendations from the County Trustee Board**

**County President** handed the chairmanship of this meeting over to the County Lead Volunteer.

**County Lead Volunteer** explained the selection process agreed by the Trustee Board. The recommendation to the County Scout Council is that Paul Stennett should be appointed as County Chair for a period of 3 years. Please show your hands as approval - Majority of room show of hands.

**County Lead Volunteer** handed chairmanship of the meeting back to the County President.

**b) Appoint the County Treasurer, following recommendations from the County Trustee Board**

**County President** explained that Lisa Sloan was stepping down following this meeting and that the position will temporarily be vacant, whilst a successor is recruited, with the successor to be co-opted to the Trustee Board by the Trustees, ahead of the next AGM.

**c) Appoint members of the County Trustee Board, following recommendations from the County Trustee Board**

**County President** explained the recommendation to the County Scout Council of the outgoing Trustee Board, to prevent the whole Trustee Board from being up for election at the same time and to ensure continuity on the Board, that the following appointments be made:

**2- Year Period**

- Graham Monk
- Sarah Griffiths
- Clair Willis
- Matt Edson

**1 Year Period**

- Paul Walker
- Jim Freake
- Chris Green
- 18 - 25 representative – Vacant (to be co-opted by the Trustee Board, once candidate identified)

Quorum          Majority of room show of hands.

**County President** thanked the Trustees for their work during the year and, in particular, those members who are standing down – Lisa Sloan, Matt Brace and Tony Humphries.

**d) Re-appoint County President and Vice Presidents**

**County Chair** noted that the County Scout Council appoints the County President and/or Vice Presidents.

Chair advises that Lord Petre is proposed as County President and J Chris Bailey, George Courtauld, Barry J Cousins, L Alan Jordan, as Vice Presidents.

Quorum          Majority of room show of hands.

**e) Appoint the Auditor**

**County President** confirms that Edmund Carr has been proposed, seconded and is qualified for the role, and asks for a show of hands to approve Edmund Carr's nomination.

Quorum          Majority of room show of hands.

**f) Elect representatives of the County Scout Council to represent the County on the Council of The Scout Association**

**County President:**

Under rule 6.5 of Policy, Organisation and Rules, we need to elect County representatives to the Council of The Scout Association.

We need to elect 2 members and 2 18-24 members to the Council of The Scout Association.

**The two people nominated as members of the Council of The Scout Association are:**

- 1) Currently Paul Stennett (third year of a 3-year term)
- 2) Currently Graham Monk (third year of a 3-year term)

**The two youth representatives of the County Scout Council nominated to represent the County on the Council of The Scout Association** are:

- 3) Proposed Isobel Crane (first year of a three-year term)
- 4) Proposed Jess Macdonald (Third year of a three-year term)

The aforementioned have been nominated and seconded. Please can I have a show of hands for their election.

Quorum: Majority of room show of hands.

## **7) World Scout Jamboree Presentation**

**County President** introduced some of the young people who attended the World Scout Jamboree last year in South Korea, who told us about their experiences.

Harry Clarke, Emma Griffiths, Edith Jefferson, Lucas Wait & Grace Woollard

## **8) Presentation & Awards**

Bob Bye, County Lead Volunteer, presented awards to:

Chris Beales - Wood Badges for First Aid Team and Supporting Adults Support Manager  
Stephen Deighton - Silver Wolf

## **9) Closing remarks**

**County President** closes the AGM at 8:35pm, thanking everyone for attending. Confirmed the arrangements for the rest of the event (buffet).

## **Attendees (including Members of the Essex County Scout Council)**

Mark Rendle	Malcolm Taylor
Lisa  Griffin	Matt Edson
Andy Daykin	Chris Beales
Stuart Carter	Gaven Wood
Lynn Oscroft	Clair Willis
Richard Oscroft MBE	Clive Laurence
Bill Marshall	Nigel How
Gina Mills	Neil Bleakley
Toby Riches	Sarah Griffith
Julie Talbot	Paul Walker
Ron Talbot	Steve Deighton
Lorraine Smith	Paula Deighton
Julie Hickman	Cathy Knight
Peter Victory	Chris Green
Iain Rider	Diane Brown
Andy Harper	Joe Coluard
Clair Harper	Paul Billings
Beks Kornie	Karen Packer
David Victory	Jim Freake
Barry Cousins	Pat Bailey
Chris Bailey	Harry Clarke
Robert Pickers	Emma Griffiths
Graham Monk	Edith Jefferson
Gill Coble	Lucas Wait
R Talbot	Grace Woollard
David Wright	