



**Minutes of the 105th Annual General Meeting of Kent County Scout Council
held on Saturday, 7th October 2023
at Lower Grange Farm**

Present: County President Bill Cockcroft DL, County Lead Volunteer Dean Harding, County Chairman Desmond Harris, County Secretary Tony Hogben and members as recorded.

1. Welcome

The County President, Bill Cockcroft DL welcomed everyone.

Apologies were received and had been recorded.

2. Minutes of the 104th Annual General Meeting held on 8th October, 2022

The Minutes were available on the County website prior to the meeting.

**They were accepted as an accurate record.
The County Chair signed the minutes.**

3. Annual Report and Accounts 2022-3

The County Chair, Des Harris referred members to the Trustees Report and Annual Accounts for the year ended 31st March 2023 which was available to all via the County website prior to the meeting. He then gave his report.

Welcome to our County President, Vice Presidents, guests and fellow volunteers to the Kent County Scout AGM and Awards presentation.

I would like to start by saying thank you to all of you for the time, patience and effort you put in week-in week-out for Kent Scouts; running a Squirrel Drey, helping at a Beaver Colony, keeping a Cub Pack going, assisting at a Scout Troop or encouraging Explorers.

Fantastic activities are run by you throughout the county every week, at group, district and county level. Our excellent County-led event Kent International Jamboree in the summer of 2022 was an example of this, with 5000 young people coming together for seven days of international adventure, fun and friendship. Organised and run by our own leaders from around the county, a fantastic effort from you all. With extra special praise for Andy Trill who master-minded the whole event. He must have enjoyed it, as he has agreed to do it all again in 2025.

A big thank you must go to all our Trustee Boards around the county again at group and district level, supporting Scouting through governance, fundraising and administration.

Our County Office at Lower Grange Farm is doing an excellent job in supporting our county teams and districts. Jade joined the office team in April and Jamie moved on in August 22 when we welcomed Lynne as our new office manager. Lynne was thrown in at the deep end just after KIJ. Tracey Swift our treasurer moved on at Christmas, but we were very lucky as Jamie did not go far and now volunteers as the County Treasurer and is doing an excellent job. All our office team support us and LGF activity centre throughout the year.

LGF Activity Centre has had a very busy year, residential camps and activity weeks have been particularly busy. Sam and her team have coped very well with the extra demand 2022 has given them. We welcomed Rhys and Ethan on board to strengthen our team of activity instructors, offering lots of adventurous activities to Scouts and the public. Like all activity centres, maintenance is a constant challenge and our SAS team always rise to the challenge to keep on top of what seems to be a never-ending list.

Our ever-increasing list of activities and events at Lower Grange Farm, from external events like weddings, parties, conference meetings and school residential camps remains high – we are nearly fully booked for 2024 with clients returning year after year.

Our Scouting bookings are again very popular, such as Beaver and Cub fun days, activity days, camps and Christmas parties. Section activity evenings, shooting, climbing, archery and lots more evening activities are increasing all the time.

Growth and Development has been a major factor in our plans to recover from a pandemic and is having an enormous impact. Our team has strengthened with the addition of Abby joining in January, and both Polly and Andrea joining later in the year.

We've got great plans to aid growth, and already have good results with new members and sections developing around the county.

I would like to end by thanking our Board of Trustees and sub-committees for all the hard work and effort that they put in, making sure we keep inline and profitable, which ensures we can afford to give the young people of Kent everything they need. I would also like to thank the County Commissioner for his inspirational leadership and whose passion and enthusiasm seems to know no bounds. Thank you too for all you are doing today and what you will be doing tomorrow for Kent Scouts.

The Chair proposed that members accept the Kent Scouts' Annual Report and Accounts for 2022-3, which had been approved by the County Trustee Board.

The County Treasurer, Jamie Lucas added his summary of the finances.

The financial year 2022-2023 was the first full financial year since 2018-2019 which was not affected in any way by the Covid-19 pandemic. Both Kent Scouts and Lower Grange Farm reflected this with a full schedule of activities and events taking place throughout the year as can be seen in our accounts with a total income for the financial year of £1.53m as opposed to 2022 which was £720k.

Much of this increase can be attributed to KIJ which took place in August 2022 after being delayed a year due to the pandemic and aided by grants totalling nearly £100k. KIJ was a great success despite the challenges that the pandemic had presented it with, seeing young people and volunteers from across the county, country and internationally coming together for a week at the County Showground – the takings at the bar certainly reflect that coming together ethos! Beyond KIJ, Kent Scouts continued to offer and support a full programme and focused on reenergising scouting in Kent following the pandemic with the year being kickstarted by Reactiv8. We also saw the roll out of the Squirrels section bringing scouting to a new cohort of young people (very young people) and helping us to grow scouting which, as treasurer, is always a good thing – more members equals more money!

whilst the accounts show a deficit for the financial year of £69k it's important to note, as mentioned already, that the KIJ grants were recorded in the prior financial year but spent in this financial year.

Lower Grange Farm also continued to grow from strength to strength showing a total income for the year of £262k an increase of some £20k on the previous year – please correct me if I'm wrong but I believe that this represents the best year of income for LGF since it opened (and that theme has continued this year as well).

The staff worked incredibly hard to offer an exciting and enticing programme for young people and also ensuring diversity of income through promoting and marketing activities and events other than climbing. Whilst climbing still remains incredibly important to LGF other areas of the business have grown and developed, such as residential, and these have proved a financial success for the site. I'm sure you all would agree that the staff and volunteers at LGF should be thanked for the work they did and are continuing to do.

The year finished with the sale of land at Chalk with the money for this being reflected in the current year accounts – so I'll talk about that this time next year!

Finally, having been appointed as treasurer at the tail end of the financial year in January I would just like to thank you all for welcoming me back – it's like I had never been away!

The Treasurer, seconded the proposal to accept the Kent Scouts Trustees Annual Report and Accounts for 2022-3.

The Chair asked if there were any questions, there were none.

Members voted in favour of accepting The Annual Report and Accounts for 2022-3.

4. To receive and approve the Kent County Councils' Constitution revised in line with the Scouts Policy organisation & Rules, July 2023 edition.

The County Secretary, Tony Hogben referred to the amendments in POR (July 2023), chapter 5. The revised Constitution was available to all via the County website prior to the meeting. It would replace the existing Governing Document that was last readopted in 2016 and amended in 2020. It is an interim document subject to further amendment(s) in line with POR (October 2023) when released. It would then be readopted at the Annual General Meeting in 2024.

Members voted in favour of adopting the Constitution

5. County Lead Volunteer's Report (Dean Harding):

The County Lead Volunteer, Dean Harding referred to the Annual Report 2022-3 that was available on the County website. He then introduced members of Team Kent.

Jane Lambert - Growth

- Increase in young people 3%
- 4 to 18 year olds = 15,272
- Squirrels up by 141%
- Volunteers = 5,144
- Waiting lists = 3032

Growth in Scouting can be seen as a litmus test of our overall goals. For the year April 22 to 23 we had an overall increase in young people, including Network of 3% compared to 2022 and this brings us to around 90% of pre-pandemic figures.

Some of you may be surprised know leaders across the county are still working hard to reopen some lost sections and this should be reflected in the next census. What I don't think you'll be surprised by, is that Squirrels has really taken off and we expect that to continue. The new section benefitted from post-pandemic early-years funding from 'Reconnect' which enabled Kent Scouts and The Education People to offer a range of training sessions and to support the opening of new Dreys all around the county.

Volunteer numbers were slightly up on 2022, not back to pre-pandemic levels but Compass housekeeping may also have had an impact. Last year we added in an extra way to thank leaders during Volunteers' Week in June and Trustees' Week November by asking people to nominate leaders to receive a thankyou note and to have a 'cuppa on us' with a gift voucher.

One of the highlights of the year was a conference to support Group Scout Leaders in November called 'Building Strong Foundations' which hosted more than 200 lead volunteers and had workshops, presentations, including an introduction to Transformation, and a lively marketplace.

The waiting list of 3032 includes more than a thousand on the waiting list in one district and 1000 waiting for Squirrels which, hopefully, has changed as more Dreys have opened in the last few months.

Linda Thomas - Inclusivity in Kent

- 39 Groups in IMDs 1-3
- 6% of Beavers, Cubs & Scouts from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic Communities
- 8% Squirrels from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic Communities
- Sensory and EDI kits launched
- Adjustments to Scouting Training continues

As you can see, we have 39 groups out of the 233 in the county in some of the most deprived areas (IMD means Indices of Multiple Deprivation with 1 to 3 being most deprived). These groups deliver 'skills for life' across all sections to benefit more than 2000 young people in Kent.

It's worth noting that the Under Represented Communities Funding that Kent Scouts has just had agreed, will focus on new provision in areas of IMD 1-3. The other strand of work from that funding will be recruiting more leaders from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic Communities with the intention to have a more representative percentage of young people from those communities.

Last year the inclusion team developed a new sensory kit which has been a very popular resource. It comes in a draw-string bag and is designed to support wellbeing and sensory needs. These have been trialled in around 10 Scout groups and are now available for wider distribution and can either be made up by the Scout Leader or a ready-made kit can be bought from us.

We have a keyring person called "Edi" (pronounced Eddie) named in reference to our Equity, Diversity and Inclusion vision and this is part of a kit that will be used as part of a section programme and there will be more information about this soon.

The team has continued delivering the Module 36 course, which offers top tips for supporting people with additional needs, busts common myths about inclusion and offers support to leaders. We'll continue to offer this to Districts and the implementation of Transformation will see inclusion training available online.

Jools Elliott - Youth Shaped

- Youth Commissioners
- Shaping their experiences
- YouShape Awards
- 628 Young leaders

The role of our youth commissioners, as I'm sure you know, is to champion embedding young people's ideas into local Scouting and currently we have about 18 youth commissioners in districts around the Kent.

One of the key ways young people can shape Scouts is to participate in events such as the Cub Forum held last November at Lower Grange Farm, which influenced the new Cub Pack Challenge.

Another easy way to embed 'youth-shape' into our programme is including the YouShape Award which is for Beavers through to Explorers. The badge, which requires young people to plan, lead and represent, has been incredibly popular and, although I don't have numbers for Kent, I know more than 165,000 have been issued by HQ.

The Young Leader scheme continues to be popular and from 1694 Explorers we have we have in Kent there are an impressive 628 young leaders. We were only 40 off the number we had pre-pandemic and more than 200 up on last year so that's really something to celebrate. We offered centralised Young Leader training last year and 97 young people attended the event in March.

Amy Childs - Community Impact

- Porchlight sleep out £40,000
- Big Help Out
- Local Initiatives & Fundraising
- New Community Champion Award

After a 4 year break our Porchlight sleep-out had great support across the county once again. Run in October 2022 it was the main community impact event for the year, not only raising awareness of homelessness with young people in Scouts but also raising £40,000 for this worthy organisation.

You may remember back in May, that on the Bank Holiday Monday of the Coronation there was an event called The Big Help Out, a National Day of Volunteering aimed at inspiring people to try volunteering for the first time. Groups around the county got involved by inviting people into their meeting places and campsites to lend a hand and find out more about getting involved.

As usual there were loads fantastic local initiatives that made a difference to communities around the county such as beach cleans, collections for Royal British Legion's Poppy Day Appeal and for Save The Children's Christmas Jumper Appeal. There have also been a number of collections of donations and money for the Ukraine crisis.

Early in 2023 Kent Scouts launched our new Community Champion Award which is for Squirrels, Beavers and Cubs. To become a Community Champion, they need to chalk up hours doing things such as helping in their local community, fundraising or taking part in a community impact event.

Kent Scouts Volunteering Award

Bronze 88

Silver 67

Gold 45

Diamond 27

Platinum 7

The Scout section volunteering awards are now well established and last year saw 234 badges achieved. The volunteering can include things such as mowing a neighbour's grass, helping with the younger sections, fundraising or litter picking. The awards start at bronze for 25 hours and go right up to 500 hours for platinum, so that's an impressive impact on local communities when you that the Platinum Awards alone represent 3500 of volunteering.

Abby Parness / James - Programme

Sections

- 37 Dreys
- 252 Colonies
- 268 Packs
- 236 Troops
- 133 Units

Kent Scouts delivered 'Skills for Life' to 926 sections across Kent last year and, as you've already heard, that was to more the 15,000 young people. It's brilliant to see the number of Dreys growing, up 20 on the previous year, and at the last count we had more than 50 registered on Compass.

Programme Support

- Squirrels Go Nuts
- Beavers Winter Walks, Legoland
- Cubs Hever Castle, Ancient Egyptian challenge hike
- Scouts up-and-downer day at Folkestone Sports Centre
- Explorers Winter Survival

The county programme team aim to support local Scouts with a range of events to give young people the opportunity to do something different and meet other young people from around the county. The events on the slide are just a few highlights of the large-scale events and these were supplemented by more events delivered by the county active support team such as Ahoy! at the Historic Dockyard and the Beaver and Cubs activity days.

'Squirrels Go Nuts' was the first big event for the new section and was run at Lower Grange Farm. It was so successful that we ran it again this summer and it looks set to become an annual event.

Air

- 448 under 18s
- 519 over 18s

I also want to briefly mention air activities as we are very fortunate in Kent to have a microlight running sessions for Scouts and Explorers. As you can see, almost 1000 people took part in Microlighting last year which is a pretty amazing opportunity.

District Events

- Camps
- Fun days
- Multi activity days
- Night hikes
- Jubilee celebrations
- St George's Day

Many districts have ADCs and Active Support Teams to help with programme locally and they also offer an amazing array of events – I recommend checking out the district pages of the new annual review as it's inspiring! Once again, young people are able to try something new and to mix with others outside of their own group.

I think it's safe to say that most districts ran a district camp. Gillingham, Weald and Dover had fun days, and Sevenoaks, Sittingbourne and Swanley all had activity days while Maidstone West went for a water activity day. Malling took over Lower Grange Farm for their 4-yearly multi-activity camp and Ashford District had their annual night hike.

Many districts had Jubilee celebrations and, of course, all had St Georges Day events in various creative ways. For most districts that was the first real get-together since the pandemic and many of you involved families of the Scouts and the local community in your events.

Chief Scout Awards

- Acorn 37
- Bronze 761
- Silver 758
- Gold 360
- Platinum Awards 108
- Diamond 55

It takes great programme planning and organisation to give young people the opportunities to achieve their top awards, so it's brilliant to see more than 2000 were presented and a credit to all involved.

This is the first census to record the new Squirrels' Acorn Award and out of the 37

Awarded 8 were at just one group, 4th Sevenoaks, and another 8 across Gillingham District. Bronze and Silver Awards showed a strong recovery in numbers with Bronze up 163 and Silver by 175 on the previous year.

Explorer Belts 5

Young Leader Belts 25 were 14

Duke of Edinburgh's Award

- *Bronze 134*
- *Silver 58*
- *Gold 23*

Queen's Scout Awards 11

The Explorer Belt, which many of you will know, involves a challenging 10-day expedition wasn't awarded in Kent in 21-22 so it's great to see 5 presented last year.

With the increase in Young Leader numbers mentioned by Jools earlier, we've seen an uplift in Young Leader Belts, increasing from 14 the year before. These are awarded when young people have completed all the modules and missions of the training scheme.

Again, we can see good recovery in the number of Duke of Edinburgh's Awards issued, especially with the increase in Bronze by 55. Queen's Scout Awards went up from 6 the previous year and later we'll be presenting Queen's Scout and King's Scout Awards along with some Duke of Edinburgh Golds.

Simon Corrigan - Perception

Virtual

- *New County Web Site*
- *Facebook 5.8k followers*
- *X (was Twitter) 2.9k Followers*

As many people, potential members, make their first contact with us online it's essential Kent Scouts is easy to find, accessible and presents the right image when they find us. The new county website launched in September 2022 and has seen growth in numbers with over 10,000 individual visitors each month.

Social media continues to increase the visibility of our events, trips and projects to both internal and external audiences with regular posts. Both Facebook, with 5.8k followers, and the smaller X (was Twitter), with almost 3k prove useful platforms for profile raising and promotion.

Kent & Wider Community

- *Radio Advert*
- *County Show*
- *Queen's funeral / King's Coronation*
- *KIJ*

New for 2022 – 23 was using a radio advert to promote Kent Scouts. Our advert called 'You don't have to be Bear Grylls' ran 1000 times over a 3 month period on KMFM which has a weekly audience of around 158,000 each week.

We headed back to the Kent County Show after a break of 2 years and it was great to be able to showcase Scouts to so many non-members and give them a little taste of adventure.

Our young people also took part in high profile events including the Queen's funeral and the King's Coronation which featured in local and national news.

The return of large events following COVID such as KIJ provided great media coverage with interest across both traditional and social media

Lower Grange Farm

- *800 Camping Nights*
- *40 Educational group visits*
- *70 Short courses*
- *Community Events*

Particular to Kent Scouts is Lower Grange Farm as our public-linking face.

Last year 800 non-Scouts camped overnight at LGF last year.

More than 40 non- Scout groups had activity days, residentials or enrichment programmes.

There were more than 70 short courses –such as NICAS climbing courses and archery courses for young people.

No doubt all visitors will have been aware by the end of their visit, if not before, of the connection to Scouting. Lower Grange Farm also provides a great location for community events such as the popular winter fair and the Macmillan coffee morning which the active support team have run for some years. Last year the first of the summer fairs attracted a good crowd and that was so successful it was repeated in 2023. All of these reinforce Scouting as modern, relevant and delivering Skills for Life in a safe environment. It's an opportunity to introduce some of the fun and adventure that Scouting can provide and showcases facilities beyond the traditional 'scout hut'.

Craig Ward / Nirav Patel - People

Awards & Recognition

- 43 Good Service Awards
- 40 Awards for Merit
- 7 Bars to Award for Merit
- 15 Silver Acorns
- 2 Bars to Silver Acorns
- 7 Silver Wolves
- 1 Meritorious Conduct
- The annual awards ceremony

Of course, none of us volunteer for Scouting (for 2 hours a week) to get an award. That said, we all know how important it is to show appreciation and say thank you. It's great to see 115 awards were given for outstanding service last year and this is in addition to the long service awards which start after 5 years in Scouts.

Special congratulations to all 7 who got Scouting's highest award for an adult, the Silver Wolf in the last year. Well-deserved and truly an exceptional number in one year. Our county chair had the honour of his award being presented by Lady Colgrain who, not being familiar with the award, accidentally dubbed him the 'Silver Fox' which has stuck!

Training

- 961 first aid bookings
- 249 other modules booked
- 300+ Wood Badges recommended
- Compliance up to 97%

Providing the training to enable our volunteers to deliver excellent Scouting to young people is essential and, of course, the need move forward in the way we do that has been recognised by 'Transformation'.

In the year 2022 to 23 our first aid trainers had 961 booking onto first aid courses which were a combination of on-line and face to face sessions.

The other training modules such as 'Delivering a Quality Programme', 'Working with Adults' and 'Scouting for All' which were also delivered both on-line and at multi module days had 249 bookings. As a County we awarded more than 300 Wood Badges to leaders which is a great achievement.

As many of you will know compliance with training requirements has been both important and challenging but the work paid off with compliance up from an average of 95% to 97% over that period.

Transformation

- Moving to a teams based approach
- More engaging learning
- A warmer welcome for all
- Digital tools to get things done

In concluding the County Commissioner thanked everyone for their support and contribution to Scouting in Kent.

6. In accordance with rule 5.4.2.3 of POR (July 2023) the County Scout Council may co-opt members annually, including representatives of organisations with whom it is desired to maintain co-operation. The following have been proposed by the County Commissioner for co-option to the County Scout Council:

The County Commissioners of the three Guide Counties within the County of Kent together with the senior officer of both the Medway Council and the Kent County Council Youth Services.

The meeting approved these nominations.

7. To approve the County Lead Volunteer's nomination for County Chair

The County Lead Volunteer nominated **Desmond Harris** to continue as County Chair and asked for a show of acceptance of the nomination.

The meeting approved the nomination.

8. To elect a County Secretary

Jackie Rampall proposed the election of **Tony Hogben** to continue as County Secretary and Peter Nicholls seconded the proposal.

The motion was carried unanimously.

9. To elect a County Treasurer

John Glentworth proposed the election of **Jamie Lucas** as County Treasurer and Jane Gurnett seconded the proposal.

The motion was carried unanimously.

10. To approve the County Lead Volunteer's nominations, in consultation with the County Chairman, for membership of the County Trustee Board.

The County Lead Volunteer, in consultation with the County Chairman, nominates the following for membership of the County Trustee Board: -

Alex Bates, Assistant County Commissioner - Programme
Neil Gearing, Deputy County Commissioner
Nirav Patel, Deputy County Commissioner
Lisa Thornton, County Appointments Chair
Andy Trill, Deputy County Commissioner

The meeting approved nominations.

11. To receive the names of persons elected to be members of the County Trustee Board

Two trustees had served their 3 year term. It was proposed due to the period of transformation their term is extended for a further year until the Annual General Meeting in 2024.

Janice Grant
Kenneth Ridgway

The meeting approved the proposal.

12. Nominations of three representatives of the County Scout Council to serve as nominated members of the Council of The Scout Association:

Ken Ridgway proposed **Des Harris, Dean Harding and Neil Gearing** to serve as nominated members of the Council of The Scout Association and Janet Thomas seconded the proposal.

The meeting approved the proposal.

13. Nomination of three County's Youth representatives to the Council of The Scout Association is:

Nirav Patel proposed **Jools Elliott, Amy Childs and David Mabb** to serve as nominated youth members of the Council of The Scout Association and Jim Martin seconded the proposal.

The meeting approved the proposal.

14. To appoint auditors

The appointment of **Robson Laidlaw** as auditors was proposed by John Brisley and Delphine Austin seconded the proposal.

The meeting approved the proposal.

The 105th Annual General Meeting was closed by the Chair at 15.30 hours.

There followed a presentation by the Dartford young people of the World Scout Jamboree in south Korea.

Presentation of Awards

QUEEN'S SCOUT AWARD

Isobel Warrington, James English

KING'S SCOUT AWARD

David Parmenter

DUKE OF EDINBURGH'S GOLD AWARD BADGE

Joel Bishop, Edward Brackley, David Parmenter

AWARD FOR MERIT

Chris Doll, Richard Horne

CHIEF SCOUT'S COMMENDATION FOR GOOD SERVICE

Alex Bates

CHIEF SCOUT'S LENGTH OF SERVICE AWARD

Janet Thomas (25 Years)

COUNTY AWARDS

Community Project of the Year: 6/13th Faversham Beaver Scouts
Highly commended: 5th Sheppey Cubs, 1st West Malling Squirrels

Young Leader of the Year Award: Emma Smith, Jess Wilmhurst - 8th Deal (Wingham)
Highly commended: Joseph Brown - Oakwood Beavers, Tim Allan – 1st St Peters Group

Adult Leader or Supporter of the Year: Sarah Barry – 14th Canterbury

Highly commended: Jonathan Pollatos, Paul Bachelor – 12th St Johns RTW, Paul Gladwell – 1st West Malling,
Tina Dickinson – 1st Sissinghurst

Growth & Development Award: 1st West Malling Group

Media Award: Medway District Media Team

Highly commended: Maidstone West Media Team, Stuart Baron – County Media Team

Fundraiser of the Year: Josh Burke – 3rd Dartford Scouts

Highly commended: Borstal Scout Group, 1st West Malling scout Group

Young Person of the Year: Ewan Adams – Dragon Explorers

Highly commended: Jake Hawkins – Tovil Scout Group

Trustee of the Year: Gill Allan – 1st St Peters Sea Scouts

Highly Commended: Robin Plane – Maidstone West, George Cran – Royal Tunbridge Wells

Scouting in Adversity

Highly commended: Debbie Wright – Oakwood Beavers, Jo Parness – 5th Dover (St Margarets),
Sue Souter – 38/40th Strood Sea Scouts

President's Award: Sarah Barry – 14th Canterbury