



**Minutes of the 104<sup>th</sup> Annual General Meeting of Kent County Scout Council  
held on Saturday, 8<sup>th</sup> October 2022  
at Lower Grange Farm**

**Present:** County President Bill Cockcroft DL, County Commissioner 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 2021 Annual General Meeting held on 3<sup>rd</sup> November, 2021**

The Minutes were presented and accepted as an accurate record. The County Chair signed the minutes.

### **3. Annual Report and Accounts 2021-2**

The County Chair, Des Harris referred members to the Trustees Report and Annual Accounts for the year ended 31<sup>st</sup> March 2022 and gave his report.

*“Welcome Mr President, Vice Presidents, Ladies and Gentlemen and fellow Scouters to the Kent County AGM and Awards day.*

*At our last meeting I was reporting on our ‘Covid’ year and I am very glad to say we now have a better year to report on. We can look back over the last year and say we have recovered really well as a County. Our activity teams have put on some great days for all our young people. Although we could not operate until end of July 21, we bounced back with a great commitment from all our leaders helping young people get the best out of Scouting across Kent – thanks to you, our leaders. As face to face Scouting returned our leaders were quick to get back to doing what they had done pre pandemic indoor/outdoor activities, trips, events, and international trips such as Request 21 in Antarctica. - More from Dean on this later.*

*The County Trustees and sub committees have been very busy with all the challenges that come with looking after a County as big as Kent I am very pleased to see we have so many Young Trustees under 25 on our board now, I thank all Trustees for all their hard work and efforts.*

*Lower Grange Farm was able to return in April 21 and to fully start operating in July 21 without our social distancing despite the existence of some restrictions during our peak season. The resilience and hard work of our LGF team meant that LGF was as busy as ever and this has carried on throughout the year producing a very healthy result for LGF. Sam and her team at LGF have done a great job keeping our activity centre open – helping our young people reconnect with Scouting in Kent and offering lots of adventurous activities for all. Our SAS kept up the pace of the ever ongoing maintenance and repairs to LGF meeting every week to mend and repair. – Thanks to our Tuesday Club.*

*Our financial position has strengthened, with increased legacies, grants, income from our membership, and our trading income from LGF have all increased. The team in the County Office made sure our finances, bookings and enquiries were all taken care of, with all the paperwork and reports kept up to date, our Health and Safety audit had a 97% rating. A special mention has to go to Jamie for all his hard work and efforts in keeping LGF running – we will miss him. We also welcome Lynne as our new finance officer.*

*Covid had a major impact on us last year, as well as a devastating impact the year before - but now we can look forward to a new year – with a new section, Squirrels (don't get too close they bite) an exciting opportunity for all. The growth and development team have been very busy making sure they are in contact with Districts and Groups helping Scouting reconnect and opening new sections or Groups around the County.*

*We have just had the most wonderful 'anti Covid' activity of all 'Kent International Jamboree' a brilliant 10 day camp for 5000 young people from all over the world –thanks to Andy Trill, Dean and the County Team.*

*With lots of great activities, camps, events and programmes planned for the future I would just like to thank every leader in every section for what they do week in week out – without you the 'Skills for Life' would not happen”.*

**The Chair proposed that members accept the Kent Scouts' Annual Report and Accounts for 2021-2, which had been approved by the County Executive and made available to you all on the County website.**

The County Treasurer, Tracey Swift had submitted her apologies and provided a written report duly read out by the County Secretary.

*“At last year's AGM, we were reporting on the year that included the effects of the pandemic and I explained how the County were managing the finances in order to give support and prepare for the next year. So, this AGM we can now reflect on those decisions and how they measured up.*

*If you remember, we talked about cutting our budgets and saving around half of the county membership fee from 2020-2021 so that we could half the membership fee for 2021 and keep the county stable. We were planning on a deficit year for Kent Scouts. In 2021-2022 Kent Scouts did indeed show an in-year deficit of around £40k.*

*The annual accounts that are prepared for us by the auditors, consolidates the County's finances and includes Lower Grange Farm and any special projects going on. As you can see, the annual accounts are showing a surplus of £100,349 overall. This included a Re-connection grant for KIJ, plus other grants that were accessed for LGF.*

*LGF re-opened last year, and just took off, with bookings coming in rapidly. For us, this was a good sign that the young people were fully engaging with us once again. LGF returned a surplus in this financial year of £37k. A lot of this we are ploughing back into the Activity Centre, and developing the site in order to provide more activities.*

*The membership fee returned to its pre-pandemic level in March of £11.50 but the membership was down by around 28% and we will see that effect in our current financial year. With the introduction of squirrels this year, we are looking forward to growth in the county.*

*I would like to thank Jamie in the office, who has done a sterling job throughout the pandemic, and applied for grants to keep the finances stable. Jamie has now moved to London and we wish him all the success. We would like to welcome Lynne Harrison, who has taken over the reins from Jamie. I am particularly grateful to both Lynne and Jamie, as it does make the Treasurers role much easier.*

*Finally, I would like to thank Martin Vinton, who took on the role of Treasurer at the last AGM, but then had to step away from the role through ill-health. I have remained as Assistant Treasurer and will do so for the time being, so if you fancy the challenge of a new role as Treasurer, with plenty of support thrown in, please speak to Des.*

*I second the Chairs' proposal that the Kent Scouts' Annual Report and Accounts 2021-2 are accepted”.*

**The Treasurer, seconded the proposal in writing to accept the Kent Scouts Annual Report and Accounts for 2021-2.**

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

**Members voted in favour of accepting The Annual Report and Accounts for 2021-2.**

#### **4. County Commissioner's Report (Dean Harding):**

*It is always a challenge writing a report for an AGM, not only remembering all the great things that have happened in a County the size of Kent with the amount of amazing Scouting that happens but also keeping the report as brief as possible so I don't take up your whole afternoon and evening. I hope this year will be my shortest report given so we can get to the refreshments and socialise and then move onto the part you are all here for; the awards!*

*The last year has seen us move away from a period of time dominated by Covid. Moving from a programme that was adapted and for online and back to what dare I say, is normal. This has been challenging in itself, Groups and sections moving back to weekly programmes in their HQs, back to face to face, back to nights away.*

*For many reasons we lost adults and young people and sections reduced due to the pandemic. However, we have dusted ourselves down, picked ourselves up and stabilised quickly and now working hard to develop and cope with the high demand that is now on us, as parents wanted their young people to get out and about away from a computer that became a lifeline and experience the challenge and outdoor adventure Scouting can offer. All age ranges have managed to start the recovery to pre pandemic numbers with a 14 % growth, engaging with over 14,000 young people.*

*Let's have a look at what Kent Scouts have been up to*

*Kent Scouts video shown .....*

*There have been so many events and activities but two that really must be mentioned are Request, the trip to the Antarctic following the achievements of Shackleton 100 years previous. Well done Alan Noake and the fantastic team. An absolutely amazing project executed in pin point detail that has touched the lives of so many in Kent and around the world.*

*And KIJ that was cancelled by the team from the Summer of 2021 due to the challenges of covid but thankfully we were able to run this Summer thanks to the Reconnect Funding from Kent County Council that enabled us to maintain the pricing to support so many young people at a time where supply chain and pricing went crazy as well as reluctance to commit during the unknown covid period. KIJ was just what the doctor ordered, the chance to bring everyone together again and celebrate Scouting mixed with one of the hottest Summers and lots of hard work by many volunteers. It was a great success, thank you to Andy Trill and the whole team.*

#### *Sections*

*This year has seen the newest section Squirrels start around the County; we are now sitting at 36 dreys around Kent engaging with early years from 4-6 years old, last July just 100 Squirrels 'went nuts' at the first ever County event here at Lower Grange Farm.*

*The rest of the programme sections from Beavers through to Active Support have been pulling activities and events together to support the sections around the County, some of the section teams have been expanding to grow the support given, a welcome and thanks to those new team members. In the review booklet look at some of the teams reports to see what they have been up to.*

#### *Districts*

*Scouting around the Districts is where even more work has been done. Dealing with covid challenges, dealing with the challenges of risk assessments and dealing with the demands of compliance. Everything that has been done at group and district levels by so many has been absolutely phenomenal. Please time to look at the annual review and look at the reports from around the Districts.*

*Thanks to our team of DCs who really are the backbone of the County and are true hero's making sure local Scouting is managed appropriately.*

#### *Growth and Development*

*We have continued to invest in growth and development, our staff have been working hard to not only develop new provision but to support Groups that are experiencing a multitude of challenges. The team have been key to making sure Kent Scouts is being shouted about at events like the County Show at which supported by a fantastic team of volunteers we spent 3 days showcasing what we do. They have also been instrumental making events happen like Reactive8 that was held at the Dockyard to help reenergise our leadership with ideas that would support our programmes and they have also helped me drive projects forward like the radio promotion that we run for 3 months on KMFM. Thanks to Jane, Jade and Yolanda*

#### *Youth Engagement*

*As you know youth engagement is integral to our organisation at every level. This year Nirav Patel became too old so had to step down from the role of CYC. I would like to thank him for the work he did as our CYC and really pleased he was able to step into a DCC Role. The standard of candidates that came forward for Nirav's replacement was high and I am pleased that Adam Ray was selected and able to take up the mantle. He has been doing a fantastic job making sure Kent's youth voice is heard especially as a trustee.*

#### *Lower Grange Farm*

*LGF remains at the heart of Kent Scouts providing a base and a fantastic venue for all our needs.*

*We understand that it is a bit far for some to use on a regular basis but the centre is continuing to look at ways it can support Scouting around the County from large activity days to permit training courses and use of meeting rooms. Demand remains high and I would like to thank all of the team in the office for their support, a special thank you to Jamie and Alison for all they do, a massive thank you to Sam and the activity instructors for all their hard work in giving all that attend the site a memorable experience. Thanks also go to Ron and Martin who look after things on site. A special mention to the Active Support Team who work hard on numerous projects and support on the various sub committees.*

#### *The Future*

*Scouting over the next 18 months or so will experience some change that will hopefully support all of our Scouting experience and drive our organisation forward. Some of these changes will include*

- Creating a warmer welcome for new volunteers*
- Simplifying volunteering by changing roles and team structures*
- Making learning valuable, focused and convenient*
- Developing a new digital experience to reduce the administration for everyday things, like managing member data*
- Reviewing how we will look with a uniform review*

*All very exciting, Kent will focus on supporting these changes and help Districts to appoint a 'change lead' to help support and guide us through the process working with GSLs to drive through the changes.*

*Kent will also continue to make Scouting safe, not only our activities but the venues we use and make sure our volunteers are protected and compliant.*

*We will continue to raise our profile, there are still people out there that think we are a male only organisation.*

*We will continue to grow the development support we give around the County. We will support GSLs with their induction as well as their ongoing learning.*

*We will be expanding our younger years provision with more Squirrel Dreys.*

*We will do our best to make Scouting available to all who want it by reducing those waiting lists.*

*We will bring all our sites together around the County to support our nights away offering and continually expand our offering and support at LGF.*

*Our biggest challenge however will be supporting Groups, young people and their families during these challenging times. Making sure groups can operate and are financially viable. Supporting Groups to be key in their local community. Making sure our leaders have the creative skills to offer an interesting and challenging programme that is financially accessible in supporting our young people with the challenges they experience especially their mental health living at a time surrounded by uncertainty.*

*Thank you, Sections.*

*Leading the County is a fantastic privilege and is certainly a team effort!*

*Thank you*

*Neil looking after the DCs, Melvin and Paul and all the programme section teams from Squirrels through to SAS. Craig for training and the work on compliance. Andy for activities, land to air and the jamboree. Nirav who stepped up from CYC to DCC taking on the challenge of delivering the changes over the next couple of years. Adam our Youth Commissioner. Thanks to all the section ACCs for all they do from community impact to inclusion, DofE to International, all truly fantastic.*

*Thanks to our trustees, to Des, for his support, Tony for keeping us organised, our treasurers Martin and Tracy for their support and all the other trustees for their work on the various sub committees.*

*Finally, thanks to each and every adult, whether a leader, occasional helper, young leader or trustee that make Scouting happen daily around our fantastic County.*

**5. In accordance with rule 5.16 of POR (August 2022) 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.**

**6. To approve the County Commissioner's nomination for County Chair**

The County Commissioner announced that **Desmond Harris** would be County Chair and asked for a show of acceptance of the nomination.

**The meeting approved the nomination.**

**7. To elect a County Secretary**

Jane Wilson proposed **Tony Hogben** to continue as County Secretary and Jane Lambert seconded the proposal.

**The motion was carried unanimously.**

**8. To elect a County Treasurer**

Peter Bodman proposed the election of **Tracey Swift** as County Treasurer and Nirav Patel seconded the proposal.

**The motion was carried unanimously.**

**9. To approve the County Commissioner's nominations, in consultation with the County Chairman, for membership of the County Executive.**

The County Commissioner, in consultation with the County Chairman, nominates the following for membership of the County Executive: -

**Alex Bates, Assistant County Commissioner Explorer Scouts**

**Elizabeth Cass**

**Neil Gearing, Deputy County Commissioner**

**Nirav Patel**

**Lisa Thornton**

**Andy Trill, Deputy County Commissioner**

**The meeting approved these nominations.**

**10. To receive the names of persons elected to be members of the County Executive**

In accordance with note 3 of the Kent County Scout Council Governing Document (approved by the Kent County Scout Council at their Extraordinary General Meeting on 20th September 2016) there are six elected members of the County Executive each serving a period of three years with two being elected each year.

There was one candidate for the one vacancy the following was elected as a trustee:

**Catherine Kirkpatrick**

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

Stuart Barron proposed **Des Harris, Dean Harding and Neil Gearing** to serve as nominated members of the Council of The Scout Association and Jim Martin seconded the proposal.

**The proposal was accepted by the meeting.**

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

Sverre Sverresson proposed **Jools Elliott, Nirav Patel and Adam Ray** to serve as nominated youth members of the Council of The Scout Association and Debby Pearce seconded the proposal.

**The proposal was accepted by the meeting.**

**13. To appoint auditors**

The appointment of **UHY Hacker Young** as auditors was proposed by Rebecca Martin and Ken Ridgway seconded the proposal.

**The proposal was accepted by the meeting.**

The 104<sup>th</sup> Annual General Meeting was closed by the Chair at 15.20 hours.

**Presentation of Awards**

**DUKE OF EDINBURGH'S GOLD AWARD BADGE**

Joshua Barkaway, Honor Tucker, Isobel Warrington, Zak Welsh, Edward Brackley, George Simcox

**QUEEN'S SCOUT AWARD**

Charlotte Burring, Amy Childs, Katrina Davenport, Nathan Ottaway, Edward Brackley, George Simcox

**CHIEF SCOUT'S LENGTH OF SERVICE AWARD**

**15 Years** – Richard Horne

**20 Years** – Jenn Abel

**40 Years** – Melvin Wilson

**50 Years** – Tony Hogben

## **COUNTY AWARDS**

**Media Award** – Lucy Whittington

**Trustee of the Year** – Des Harris

**Adult Leader or Supporter of the Year** – Colin Cope, 8<sup>th</sup> Tonbridge

**Young Leader of the Year Award** – Sophie Cannon, 6<sup>th</sup> Ramsgate

**Young Person of the Year** – Oliver Norton, 1<sup>st</sup> St Lawrence

**Fundraiser of the Year** – Yalding Scout Group

**Community Project of the Year** – 1<sup>st</sup> Aylesford Scout Group

**Skills for Life Award** – Georgina Moore, ESU 4 Dover

**President's Award** – Horsa Beavers, 1<sup>st</sup> Aylesford Scout Group