



Scouts

7th Epsom (Methodist)

Five Year Development Plan 2021 - 2025

Do more...

Learn more...

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Be more.

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1. About this document

The purpose of this five-year development plan (the Plan) is to focus on 7th Epsom Group's capabilities and, in particular, its ambitions and what actions are needed that will help achieve them.

The 7th Epsom Group Executive Committee 'own' the plan and, working closely with the Group Scout Leader (GSL), is responsible for reviewing and updating the actions within it via a standing Agenda item at their meetings.

Our vision ...

...is highlighted in each part of this plan. Associated actions are summarised at the end of the document and take into account the immediate and short-term challenges and any issues that may affect progress towards the vision. At the Annual Review & AGM the agreed set of actions for the coming year are presented and progressed through the Group Executive Committee meetings.

2. Background

The Plan was written with a horizon of 'normal' Scouting but throughout 2020 and the beginning of 2021 the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic has significantly curtailed what could be undertaken in the pursuit of Scouting. The Scout Association (TSA) Framework was developed and aligned with Government-approved guidance for the youth sector during the pandemic and, although Scout Groups have autonomy in determining what activities are undertaken, they are always under the governance of District, County and National guidance.

As a result, we have written the Plan on the assumption that the pandemic will not impact the majority of its timeframe and we will continue to provide fun, adventure and develop skills for life. However, we have also included below our short-term objective and vision for when limitations and restrictions are in place which mean we either cannot meet face-to-face or cannot meet without social distancing.

7th Epsom during the COVID-19 pandemic

Our versatile and creative team of volunteer Leaders have ensured we have continued to keep our Group's Sections running, even when little or no face-to-face activities have been possible. Using the Zoom online meeting tool, we have provided a series of fun and educational activities and, when limited numbers have been allowed to meet in open spaces, we have provided suitably distanced physical activities and challenges which have been well received. Importantly, both approaches have kept the opportunity for our Members to continue to have social interaction with their Scouting friends.

Our vision ...

...is to always provide safe, high quality, social and engaging activities that our Members can enjoy and benefit from. We will transition from wholly online to socially distanced meetings when COVID restrictions permit. Returning to the full range of Scouting activities will be a delight we will share at the earliest opportunity when it is safe to do so.

3. About 7th Epsom Group

The 7th Epsom (Methodist) Scout Group is resident at the Epsom Methodist Church (EMC) in the centre of town; we have an illustrious history reaching back to 1927. Since then, we have evolved into a modern and socially responsible Group that offers all young people from 6 to 25 years of age the opportunity to have "fun, adventure and develop skills for life and give them the opportunity to enjoy new adventures, experience outdoors and take part in a range of creative, community and international activities, interact with others, make new friends, gain confidence and have the opportunity to reach their full potential".

We have around 200 young people (Members) in the Group and, although numbers in themselves are not important, the broad programme we offer them is an indication of the capabilities and health of the Group. This success is due to the continued dedication of the Leader Team in providing an interesting and varied programme both for the weekly Section meetings and also for Group events and activities.

Our Group is a registered charity and relies on its Trustees and **Group Executive Committee** for governance so that the Leaders can concentrate on the operational priority of providing a good Scouting experience for our Members.

a.

Funding

7th Epsom Group is funded by annual subscriptions and a number of fundraising activities. Subscriptions cover the cost of belonging to - and being insured by - TSA, the general running costs of providing transport and the costs associated with providing a diverse range of activities at weekly Section meetings. Additional, optional activities and camps are funded by the Members who attend them. However, the Group's philosophy is that no young person shall be denied the opportunity to experience Scouting on the grounds of ability to pay, so we maintain a fund to cover a portion of the costs in such cases.

b.

Executive Committee

The 7th Epsom Group Executive Committee (The Exec) plays a vital role in the sound running of our Scout Group. It meets four times a year to carry out administrative tasks, make decisions and to ensure that the best quality Scouting can be delivered to young people in the Group. As a registered charity, the core members of The Exec are the legal Trustees of the Group. They are supported by **Section Leaders, Parent Representatives** and a number of co-opted positions. The co-opted members are **Quartermaster, Transport Manager, Subscriptions Secretary** and a **Newsletter Editor**.

Our vision ...

...is to have an active and effective Committee Member for each available post and to engage with our Members and their parents through an interesting and well attended Annual Review & AGM each year.

c.

HQ

We have a modern and well-equipped HQ which is used regularly by all Sections of the Group. It provides a safe and accessible environment for many of the Group's activities.

We also use EMC accommodation where available and occasionally need to book additional accommodation elsewhere on a Friday night when the Scout Troop and Explorer Unit both meet.

Our vision ...

... is to ensure all Sections have access to the safe space and facilities they need for their activities.

d.

Building Maintenance

Caretaking and maintenance of the HQ is the responsibility of EMC who, in return, keep the income from any outside use of the building. This is covered by 'License to Occupy' agreement between 7th Epsom Scout Group and EMC.

e.

Equipment

Since the 2019 build of our new stores, we have sufficient on-site storage for our current equipment. All camping and activity equipment is checked, repaired/replaced and maintained as appropriate by **The Quartermaster** who is also responsible for providing an online capability to cover the booking in and out of equipment.

Our vision ...

... is to maintain an accessible, well-run quartermaster store with a sound life cycle of key equipment.

f.

Transport

We own two minibuses, a box trailer and a canoe trailer. Together, these provide us with enough autonomy to support our range of activities and camps. These are maintained and made accessible for use and hire by **The Transport Manager**.

Our vision ...

... is to have a safe and effective fleet of vehicles that are regularly maintained and replaced, and a pool of drivers that are suitably qualified and regularly retested. We aim to set aside funds each year that enable timely replacement of vehicles.

g. Uniform Exchange

We operate a Uniform Exchange scheme to provide a cost-effective way of providing uniform as the young people grow and provide the Group garments. A designated Leader maintains the Exchange.

Our vision ...

... is that the Group garments stock is well managed and meets the needs of our Members.

4. Fundraising

We cannot achieve our objectives solely through annual subscriptions so we aspire to have a number of annual and occasional ad-hoc fundraising events to provide supplementary funds to cover purchases like transport and large items of kit. We also want to ensure we have sufficient reserves to support special events like international trips.

a. Book Fair

EMC has run an annual book fair since 2002 and is now one of the nation's biggest charity book sales. 7th Epsom provides support throughout the week of the fair in return for a share of the proceeds which is proportionate to our effort.

Our vision ...

... is to continue to provide sufficient help to move, sort and clear the many thousands of books donated each year.

b. Christmas Post

The Group runs a Local Community Christmas Post scheme that, as well as being an important money earner, provides a well-respected service and publicises Scouting in the community.

Our vision ...

... is to continue to run a reliable, quality service and to seek to increase the items delivered year on year.

c. Jumble Sales

The Group typically runs two large jumble sales at EMC each year and they have a good reputation for bargains.

Our vision ...

... is to continue with sales whilst an equitable return can be made for the effort expended by our adult volunteers.

d. Fireworks

The Epsom Fireworks Organisation was formed in 2019 and took over management of the Annual Display and Funfair which 7th Epsom had run from 1971 to 2018. 7th Epsom remains one of the local Scout Groups who support the organisation and running of the event in return for a share of the proceeds.

Our vision ...

... is to continue to provide support to the event and use it to promote Scouting activities.

e. Amazon Smile

7th Epsom is a registered Amazon Smile charity that anyone can use to support us when making purchases through Amazon.

f. Other

The Group runs occasional 'social' events (quiz nights, barbecues, casino nights and dances). They are usually linked to special fundraising needs like international expeditions.

Our vision ...

... is to build on our reputation for good, well-run and well-attended social events, and to maximise 'matched funding' opportunities where they exist.

5. Inclusivity and special needs

The Group welcomes everyone, irrespective of their capacity or ability and we endeavour to make reasonable adjustments to enable young people with additional needs to be involved in our Scouting activities.

We currently have members with a variety of special needs. Because of the size of the Group, we are able to integrate them successfully into mainstream Scouting activities.

Our vision ...

... is to continue this provision in line with best practice.

6. Uniformed Sections

a. Beavers

We currently run three colonies that meet weekly either on Monday, Tuesday or Thursday with a maximum number limited to 24 Beavers in each colony. At present we do not actively recruit as our waiting list provides sufficient young people to keep the three colonies full.

b.

Cubs

We currently run three packs that meet weekly either on Monday, Tuesday or Thursday with a maximum number of 24 Cubs in each pack. We do not actively recruit as our reputation and Beavers moving up provides sufficient young people to keep the three packs full.

Our vision ...

... is to have two uniformed leaders, additional adult helpers and at least one Young Leader so each junior Section can continue to provide a rich, interesting and active programme of activities on a weekly basis.

c.

Scouts

We currently run one large troop that meets weekly on a Friday evening. Most weeks, it splits into 'a trio' of groups each of two or three patrols. The programme is repeated over three weeks so that each group gets the same programme opportunities over the 'trio'.

Our vision ...

... is to have six uniformed leaders (two for each trio), with sufficient additional adult helpers and suitably qualified instructors each week to continue to provide an interesting and varied programme of activities on a weekly basis.

d.

Explorers

Our Explorer Section has Members from around the Epsom and Ewell District but primarily from 7th Epsom Scout Group. We encourage Members to take some control of their activity programme which includes a wide range of activities including supporting other charities and community projects.

Currently, we have a limited number of Explorer Leaders, so, to keep the meeting size manageable, we are running two age groups which each meet on alternate Friday evenings.

Our vision ...

... is to have sufficient uniformed leaders, additional adult helpers and suitably qualified instructors to enable weekly meetings for all Explorers.

e.

Young Leaders

The Young Leaders Unit is a District-run group in which our Young Leaders are actively involved.

Our vision ...

... is to continue to encourage our Young Leaders to attend meetings and undertake training as provided by District.

7. Leader recruitment, retention & succession planning

We are constantly looking to recruit more Leaders; the more we have the more we can do!

Our vision ...

... is to have continual Leader recruitment as well as specific campaigns to meet urgent needs; this recruitment is supported by mentoring for new Leaders, regular reviews with each individual and succession planning to try to ensure that there is 'someone in the wings' for every position.

8. Leader training

With the large number of Leaders and instructors, training is a continuous process both for normal Scouting training and specialist skills.

Our vision ...

... is for a Personal Training Advisor for every leader and adult helper to guide on relevant TSA training and to provide quality training whenever it is required for specialist skills.

9. Specialist activity skills and clubs

a. Amateur radio (RSGB registered)

We operate an RSGB (Radio Society of Great Britain) amateur radio club (call sign M0ESG), and have a few Novice licence holders who have gained their licence through our club. We also participate in Jamboree of the Air (JOTA) in October. We have a permanent radio shack in our HQ.

Our vision ...

... is to recruit and train instructors who can run regular practice sessions so that more Members are introduced to the sport.

b. Archery

We currently have no qualified archery instructors, although we own our own equipment and have an archery range in our HQ.

Our vision ...

... is to recruit and train instructors who can run regular practice sessions so that more Members are introduced to the sport.

c. Climbing

We have a few qualified instructors, our own equipment and an outdoor climbing wall between our HQ and stores.

Our vision ...

... is to expand the challenge and utilisation of our wall now the new store is built as it provides a roof over the climbing area. We want to hold regular practice sessions so that more Members can be introduced to the sport and adults can be trained and assessed as instructors.

d. Hill walking

We have qualified instructors and considerable experience of hill walking in the UK and some experience abroad. The Surrey Scout and Guide Mountaineering Club (SSGMC) is also based in our headquarters.

Our vision ...

... is to continue to provide hill walking opportunities (e.g., Easter Ex) and use our accommodation for training and sharing of hill walking experiences especially through SSGMC.

**e.
recognised)**

Shooting (Home Office

Shooting is currently dormant due to lack of qualified instructors. Although we had access to qualified shooting instructors, an indoor shooting range and our own equipment, (with both .176 and .22 calibre guns), we can only offer infrequent instruction and practice. Historically, we have had some notable successes in the National scouting competitions.

Our vision ...

... is to recruit and provide training for instructors who can run regular practice sessions so that more Members are introduced to the sport.

f.

Sporting competitions

We typically enter annual District competitions for sporting activities like football, cross-country running, pioneering and swimming. We pride ourselves on taking part and providing a fun and competitive environment.

Our vision ...

... is to encourage participation in team and individual events.

g.

Water activities

i. Canoeing

We have a good number of qualified canoeing instructors and our own canoes and equipment. We typically include canoeing in our water weekend and on other occasions during the year.

Our vision ...

... is to maintain, store and transport sufficient equipment to provide opportunities for more youngsters to be introduced to the sport. Also, to train experienced canoeists to become qualified instructors.

ii. Sailing

We currently have no qualified sailing instructors or equipment but use the facilities of the Thames Young Mariners when we run our water weekend camp in September.

Our vision ...

... is to continue to offer sailing as part of our water weekend camp.

iii. Rafting

We have a few qualified rafting instructors and our own equipment.

Our vision ...

... is to maintain and store equipment to provide opportunities for more Members to have the opportunity to go rafting and have fun. We want to train more adults to become qualified instructors.

iv. Swimming

We have a few qualified lifesavers. We take part in the annual district swimming gala.

Our vision ...

... is to increase the number of qualified lifesavers so that more opportunities can be programmed and to enable swimming on camps.

10. Group Programme

a. In UK

We have a number of group events including the following annual camps:

- Easter Expedition for Explorers and older Scouts, a four-day expedition to a mountainous area, sometimes camping and sometimes in overnight accommodation.
- Spring camp at the end of May for Cubs, Scouts and Explorers
- Summer camp at the end of July for Scouts and Explorers
- Water weekend in September for Cubs (day), Scouts and Explorers.

Our vision ...

... is to continue to offer these activities on an annual basis, providing a challenging and enjoyable experience to a greater number of individuals.

b.

International

We have historically linked with European (Swedish and Czech Republic) and African (Uganda, Tanzania and Madagascar) Scouts. These links have provided opportunities to camp with the scouts in their countries once every 3 or 4 years and we have invited the Swedish scouts to camp in the UK every 3-4 years.

Our vision ...

... is to continue and improve our International Scouting programme and to offer at least one International visit in every Scout / Explorer career.

11. Communications and PR

a. 7th Epsom News

We produce a digital newsletter several times each year. These are produced by **The Newsletter Editor** and circulated electronically via our website. This is our main channel for communicating recent and forthcoming events both with parents and to the wider community.

b.

Web site

Our Group's website (<https://www.7thepsom.org.uk>) is primarily aimed at informing the public as well as current and prospective members of our structure, activities and annual highlights. It also provides the public with a communication channel to the Group as links to relevant information and contacts.

Our vision ...

... is to focus on providing quality and engaging online content for our Group and especially the wider community who wish to know more about 7th Epsom.

c.

Social Media

We use social media for some of our communications. We recognise that General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) defines that the age of consent as 16 and so encourage/allow explorer age Members to seek parental permission to use 7thepsom_explorers as a way of keeping up to date with the Section activities.

12. Recruitment and Growth

The Group is situated in Town Ward which has one of the highest concentrations of ethnic minority groups in Surrey, although this is not reflected in the membership of the Group. We currently do not have a proactive recruitment and growth plan as our numbers are limited by the amount of adult help available.

Our vision ...

... is to maintain the capacity of our Group whilst offering good quality Scouting to our young people and to encourage a more diverse membership that better reflects our local community.

13. Action Plan (Review at Trustee and Executive Meetings)

#	Description	Action	By when	Comment
1.	Secure Parent Reps for each Section, ensure role is understood and developed in line with need of Section.	Chair / Section Leaders	Sep 2021	Needed for: Windfall, Apache, Sioux and Explorers
2.	Secure Transport Manger(s) to run and maintain our vehicles.	Exec	Summer 2021	Could be split role
3.	Refurbish and add to our climbing wall	QM	Summer 2021	
4.	Continue Leader recruitment and ensure succession planning is sound. Ask all Section Leaders to identify successor.	All section leaders and GSL	Ongoing	
5.	Streamline Leader Training and Validation	GSL / AGSL,	Ongoing	
6.	Recruit / Train instructors where we have few / none to ensure continuity of a widely varied programme.	All	Ongoing	For archery, shooting, sailing, etc.
7.	Attract more representative membership by better PR in relevant sections of the local community	Exec	Ongoing	
8.	Continue adult recruitment and ensure succession planning for all Group Executive and key Supporter positions.	Exec	Ongoing	