

Skills for Life

7th Epsom (Methodist) Scout Group

ANNUAL REPORT

2023 – 2024

Trustees' Annual Report

Public Private Benefit

The objectives of the Group are as a unit of the Scout Association. The aim of the Scout Association is to promote the development of young people in achieving their full physical, intellectual, social and spiritual potentials, as individuals, as responsible citizens and as members of their local, national and international communities. The method of achieving the aim of the Association is by providing an enjoyable and attractive scheme of progressive training, based on the Scout Promise and Laws and guided by adult leadership.

Subscriptions are charged for membership to cover immediate running costs of the Group and these do not unduly restrict membership. The Group follows the principle that no one should be excluded because of their inability to pay membership subscriptions.

Two key principles demonstrate that Scouting's aims are for the public benefit are that through the Scout method young people develop towards their full potential and that there is a clear link between the benefits for young people and the purpose of Scouting. The safety of young people is taken very seriously and the benefits Scouting activities provide far outweigh the risks. Any private benefits from Scouting are incidental, other than to those as a beneficiary.

Chairman's Report

The year ending April 2024 saw a strong Scouting programme delivered and the Group continues to thrive, albeit without a GSL in place. I would like to thank all the Leaders for their extra efforts in the circumstances.

The individual sections have continued their rich offering of activities and badges and the Group remains in good overall health. Individual section reports follow.

A full programme of camps, competitions, outings and sleepovers all took place with Spring Bank Camp, Summer Camp and Water Weekend well attended (in fact Water Weekend was as usual oversubscribed).

The Group's finances remain on a sound basis with enhanced fundraising activities. We ran Community Christmas Post as previously and also a very well supported Quiz evening early in the New Year.

Our two minibuses have been used well through the year and in spite of the associated expense provide us with programme opportunities that would otherwise not be possible.

As ever, all we achieve is only possible as a result of the volunteers who give up their time either to act as leaders/supporters of sections/activities or in support of administration, finance, etc, all of whom I thank.

Many of our volunteers are well past the age where their children were in the Group and to sustain 7Th Epsom we are in need of support from current parents. As always, we are trying to recruit more leaders, and we'd welcome any interest from parents willing to join the leader team. Additionally, we're looking for people who would be willing to do the various training courses to become activity leaders for activities such as archery, shooting and climbing.

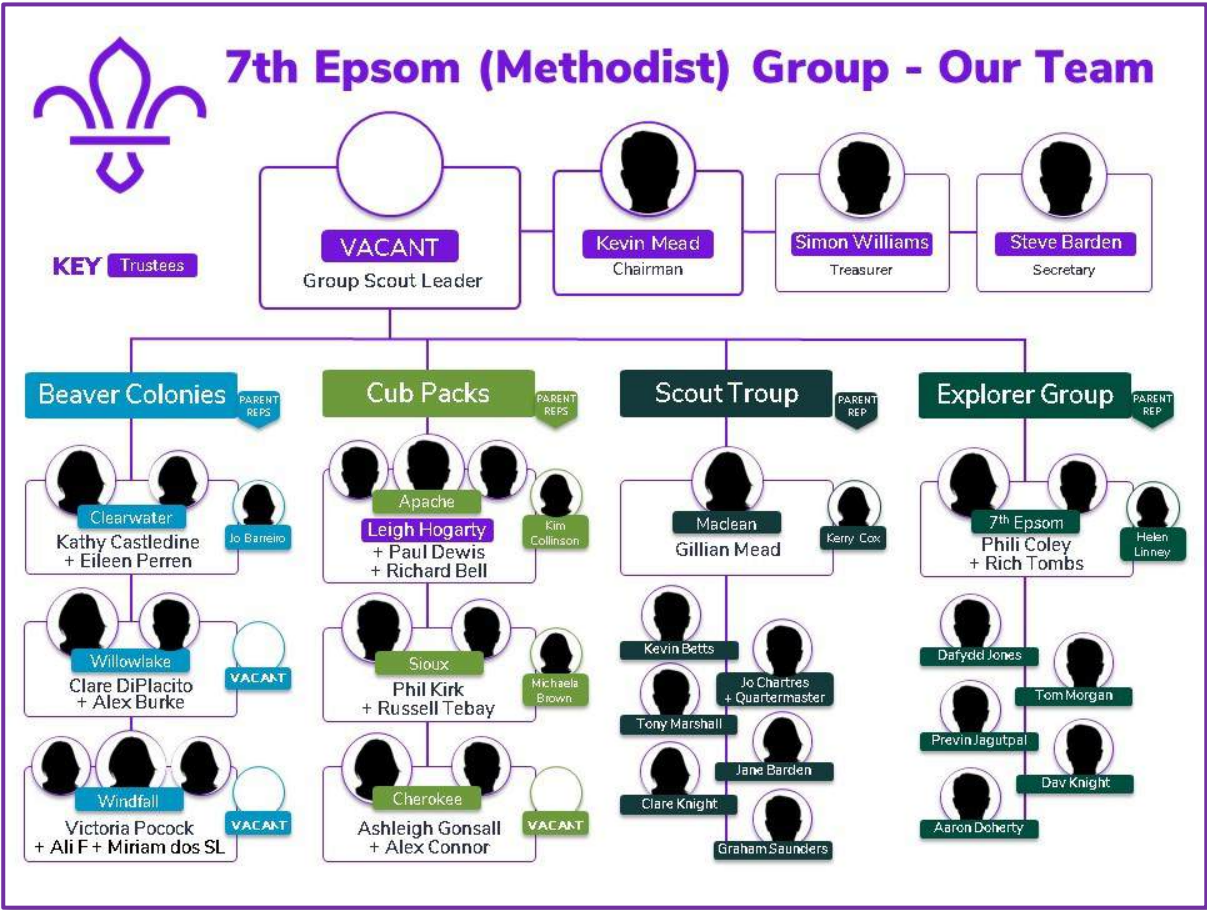
If anybody would like to lend a hand in any way, please contact myself or one of the Section Leaders.

Kevin Mead

Chairman of the Group Executive

7th Epsom (Methodist) Group 2023-24 in Numbers

- 23%** of youth membership is female +1%
- 59 BEAVERS** (3 colonies)
- 72 cubs** (3 packs)
- 47 SCOUTS**
- 28 EXPLORER**
- 206 young people** (-5%)
- 14 Young Leaders**
- More than 10,000 scouting hours** exc. camps
- We had a full season of successful camps!**
- >75 adult volunteers**
- 3,310 minibus miles** / **29 trips**
- 40 young people on our waiting list**



Our Key Actions for the Year

#	Description	Responsible	When	Comment
1.	Update and adopt our Group Constitution	Group Exec	2024 AGM	Can be accessed here
2.	Secure a Group Scout Leader.	DC + Group Chair	ASAP	Could be a shared role
3.	Ensure Assistant/Leader recruitment and succession planning is sound. Ask all Section Leaders to identify successor.	All section Leaders and GSL	Ongoing	ALs currently needed for: Willowlake, Windfall & Sioux
4.	Secure Parent Reps for each Section, ensure role is understood and developed in line with needs of Section.	Section Leaders	ASAP	Currently needed for: Willowlake, Windfall & Cherokee
5.	Streamline Leader mentoring, Training & Validation. a) Basic training b) Specialist training c) Skills training	Mentoring: VACANT Training: LH	Ongoing	Have nominated mentors for junior & senior Sections
6.	Recruit & Train Instructors where we have few / none to ensure continuity of a widely varied programme.	All	Ongoing	For archery, shooting, sailing, amateur radio, etc.
7.	Form Sub-Committee to plan our Centenary activities and celebrations.	Organising Sub-Committee	2024-27	Inaugural meeting planned for winter '24
8.	Develop and implement a plan for ongoing engagement with departing Explorers.	Exec + Expl'r leaders	Ongoing from 2025	As future supporters and leadership
9.	Ensure we run an effective ongoing training regime for addressing special needs.	Exec	ASAP	To meet evolving needs
10.	Strive to increase progressive parent engagement and to identify key skills specific parents can contribute.	SLs/Exec	Ongoing	Both activity and executive management skills needed
11.	Recruit an additional Exec Team Member to handle communications for local community & on premises	SLs/Exec	ASAP	Aimed at Improving PR

Independent Examiner's Report to the Trustees

I report on the accounts of the Group for the year ended 31 March 2024, which are set out on pages 8 & 9.

Respective responsibilities of trustees and examiner

The Group's trustees are responsible for the preparation of the accounts. They consider that an audit is not required for this year (under section 43(2) of the Charities Act 1993, and that an independent examination is required.

It is my responsibility to:

- Examine the accounts (under section 43 (3)(a) of the 1993 act;
- To follow the procedures laid down in the general directions given by the Charity Commissioners under section 43 (7)(b) of the 1993 act; and
- To state whether particular matters have come to my attention.

Basis of independent examiner's report

My examination was carried out in accordance with the General Directions given by the Charity Commissioners. An examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the Group and a comparison of the accounts presented with those records. It also included consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts, and seeking explanations from you as trustees concerning such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in an audit, and consequently I do not express an audit opinion on the view given in the accounts.

Independent Examiner's Statement

In connection with my explanation, no matter has come to my attention;

1. Which gives me reasonable cause to believe that in any material respect the requirements
 - To keep accounting records in accordance with Section 41 of the 1993 act, and
 - To prepare accounts which accord with the accounting records and comply with the accounting requirements of the 1993 Act have not been met; or
2. To which, in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

Name: **Andrew McDonald**_____

Signed:_____ Date:_____

Address: 31 Pound Lane, Epsom. KT19 8SB _____

Major Activities and Achievements in the year

The annual review presented to all parents and interested parties prior to the AGM highlights the activities and achievements during the year. This is a comprehensive document that details numbers of young people in each section, a report from each section, abbreviated accounts and a review of the year.

At the end of the year the income reserves amounted to £586,059 (2023: £579,906). The Group's policy on reserves is to hold an amount that will enable it to replace the motor vehicles. The New HQ has been recorded as an asset within the accounts.

The trustees have identified the major risks to which they believe the Group is exposed. They have reviewed these and established systems to mitigate them.

The objectives of the Group are to promote the development of young people in achieving their full physical, intellectual, social and spiritual potentials, as individuals, as responsible citizens and as members of their local, national and international communities.

The Group is a trust established under its rules, which are common to all Groups.

Trustees are appointed in accordance with the Policy, Organisation and Rules of the Scout Association. They are well acquainted over a number of years in local Scouting.

The accounts have been drawn up on the Receipts and Payments basis, which is consistent with the previous year.

Approved by the trustees on the 2nd October 2024 and signed on their behalf by:

Dr Kevin Mead – Chairman

Anthony S Williams - Treasurer

Income and Expenditure Statement for the year ended March 31st 2024

	2023/24		Total £	2022/23 £
	Unrestricted	Restricted		
	Funds £	Funds £		
Incoming Resources				
Annual Subscriptions	30,193		30,193	29,173
Income from Fundraising	6,643		6,643	6,888
Income from Camps & Activities	19,691	2,100	21,791	28,919
Section Income	55		55	750
Minibus Hire	755		755	599
Group Clothing	143		143	40
Donations	710		710	0
Gift Aid	4,659		4,659	4,739
Interest Received	972		972	425
Other Income	5		5	33
Total Income	63,827	2,100	65,927	71,566
Outgoing Resources				
Capitation Fees and Subscription Refunds	10,600		10,600	10,451
Costs of Fundraising	1,194		1,194	21
Expenditure from Camps & Activities	22,846	3,377	26,223	38,058
Section Costs	4,299		4,299	5,232
Minibus Costs	6,247		6,247	9,619
HQ Rental, Insurance and Equipment Costs	5,613		5,613	2,555
Group Clothing	0		0	518
Scout Shop	2,025		2,025	2,490
Bank Charges	120		120	144
Other Expenditure	183		183	105
Total Expenditure	53,127	3,377	56,504	69,193
Net Incoming/Outgoing resources before transfers	10,700	(1,277)	9,423	2,373
Opening Funds				
			104,959	126,586
Net Incoming/Outgoing resources before transfers			9,423	2,373
Less: Capital Expenditure			0	(24,000)
			9,423	(21,627)
Total Funds Carried Forward			114,382	104,959

Balance Sheet as at 31st March 2024

2023 £		2024 £	£
	FIXED ASSETS		
442,255	Headquarters	442,255	
32,693	Minibus	29,424	
<u>474,948</u>		<u>471,679</u>	
	CURRENT ASSETS		
104,958	Cash at Bank	114,380	
-	Debtors	-	
-	Creditors falling due within one year	-	
<u>104,958</u>	Net Current Assets	<u>114,380</u>	
<u>579,906</u>	Total Assets less Current Liabilities	<u>586,059</u>	
474,948	Designated Reserves	471,678	
	General Reserves:		
126,586	Opening Balance	104,958	
(21,628)	Movement in Year	9,423	
<u>104,958</u>	Net Incoming/Outgoing resources	<u>114,381</u>	
<u>579,906</u>		<u>586,059</u>	

BEAVERS Leaders' Report

Clearwater (Monday), **Willowlake** (Tuesday) and **Windfall** (Thursday) colonies have been very busy this year.

We continued to have a waiting list due to the demand for places.

The leadership has been unchanged across all colonies and we are grateful to have been supported by a number of enthusiastic young leaders.

All three colonies followed the same programme. The Beavers worked towards a variety of badges including the Camp Craft, Communicator, Explore, International and Experiment badges, as well as working on their challenge awards. As a result, over the year, a number of our Beavers achieved their Chief Scout Bronze Award, before swimming up to Cubs.



We were out and about in the local area, including town trails round Epsom, a night hike in Epsom Common, tracking at Horton, hikes and den building on Headley Heath, and an explore around the Langley Vale Centenary Wood. Other highlights of the year included pond dipping, monster making, pancake making, water games, science evenings, cooking s'mores over fires at Boidier Hurst and games at Court Rec. Beavers tried out climbing and caving, and have had visits from Surrey Police and from the Epsom Food Bank, to understand the work they do in the local community.



7th Epsom Beavers also took part in District events including the swimming gala and Jamboree on the Air/Internet (JOTA).



We enthusiastically attended the 7th Epsom Spring Bank camp which was great fun and was the first experience of sleeping away from home for many of the Beavers. As always, we had fantastic support from all the Beavers' parents/carers and are very grateful for this but we would love more Assistant Leaders join us, particularly to support Willowlake colony.



Kathy Castledine, Clearwater Beaver Leader
Eileen Perren, Clearwater Assistant Leader
Clare DiPlacito, Willowlake Beaver Leader
Victoria Pocock, Windfall Beaver Leader

cubs Leaders' Report

As usual the arrival of our Summer Term meant that we were determined to be back in the great outdoors as much as possible. With our Group Camp at Walton Firs on the horizon, camp skills and pioneering were the focus as well as the art of lighting fires, backwards cooking and building shelters up at Boidier Hurst and Headley.



We all had a brilliant time being with the rest of the group at Walton Firs Activity Centre. It was great to see all Sections integrating and supporting each other as well as a sense of pride at hearing the Cubs drown out everyone else around the campfire – well that's how we remember it! It was also



brilliant to see all the Cubs try something that they had never had the opportunity to try before and conquer some of their fears, whether that was spending their first night away or getting higher up the climbing wall than they thought they could.



Towards the end of term we were also lucky enough to have an orienteering session run by the Mole Valley Orienteering club who organised a fantastic evening and it supported the work the Cubs had been doing around map skills. As well as all that we once again worked in the community to litter pick around Epsom. This is always a great evening for both the Cubs and the public who get to see our young people out and about making a huge difference!



A spot of responsible resourcing was called upon when the Cubs headed to the Hogsmill River for mini raft building. The idea was for them to build their rafts out of natural materials; however, they could “buy” other items to make their rafts. The teams with the most money left after the race were declared the winners.



Our Autumn program kicked off by joining other sections at Water Weekend. A fantastic day of water activities which all of the Cubs & Leaders really enjoyed and helped the Cubs who attended gain their time on Water Staged Badge.



This term is always one of our busiest as we make the most of the light evenings and this one was no different. Following the start of term, we put the cubs through their paces as part of the athletics and athletics plus badges. Again, the Cubs impressed with not only their determination to give every activity their best shot but also for the way they cheered each other on!

After some navigation work and road safety awareness we headed back up to Boidier Hurst for a spot of fire lighting and cooking, always a favourite.

After half term a team of Cubs and parents once again helped to clear litter following the fireworks display at Hook Road Arena. Then we focused on the activities around Remembrance Sunday which included making medals of thanks to hang on the memorial at the Centenary Woods in Langley Vale during our annual hike around the impressive and thought-provoking woodland. Our young leaders then led our packs through a skills night which everyone thoroughly enjoyed and then it was onto the leaflet drops for Christmas Post – definitely more challenging in the pouring rain!!



Thanks to the support of Elaine Mustow, the District Cub Leader, we were able to let the Cubs try out their archery skills. Elaine was really impressed with how the Cubs in all 3 packs approached the activity, ensuring that it was an enjoyable evening for all. When the Cubs weren't firing off their arrows, they were taking part on the pack heats of the District Quiz competition and we were able to send 2 teams to represent the group. Both teams did really well and were brilliant ambassadors for the group with a respectable 3rd & 4th place finish



After the Christmas break, we settled quickly into our winter program.

The spring term itself was relatively short so we made sure we packed in as much as possible, with a focus on the challenge badges. This saw our Cubs complete both Stage 1 & 2 of the Air Activities Badge, understanding more about the local community in which they lived and also about the impact that our everyday lives have on the rest of the planet. The term also supported us to get the Cubs cooking, with us able to sample new foods as part of our look at the Lunar New Year, Shrove Tuesday where a marmite pancake was the surprise of the evening and getting back up to Boidier Hurst for some backwoods cooking.

Over the year we presented six Silver Chief Scout awards to our Cubs and four of our leadership team hit their five years as volunteers.

As always, the programs we run and the experiences that we are able to give our young people are only made possible by the Leaders, ACLs and parents who continue to support the three packs.



Leigh Hogarty, Apache Akela

Paul Dewis & Richard Bell, Apache Assistant Leaders

Phil Kirk, Sioux Akela

Russell Tebay, Sioux Assistant Leader

Ashleigh Gonsall, Cherokee Akela

Alex Connor, Cherokee Assistant Leader

SCOUTS Maclean Leader's Report

During the last year we have had between 40-45 Scouts each term, slightly less than we have had in previous years. The Scout Leader Team are doing their best to provide a varied Scouting programme during each term, with as many outside activities as possible.

The Scout programme could not happen without each of our Leaders dedication and commitment. Jo Chartres, Jane Barden, Kevin Betts, Tony Marshall, Graham Saunders, Clare Knight, Andy Mackay. In addition, we have a rota of parent helpers each week, and certainly on many occasions could not run our programme without them.

In March we took part in the District Challenge Hike. We had two teams, each with four Scouts. As they were all young, and new to the challenge hike, we didn't come in any of the top places, but they all indicated that it was an enjoyable event. There was not a district swimming gala this year.

Last year we held three very successful camps:

Camp	Location	# Scouts	Leader in charge
Spring Bank Camp	Walton Firs, Cobham	30	Gillian Mead
Summer Camp	Cricket Camp, Hedge End, Southampton	27	Clare Knight
Water Weekend	Thames Young Mariners, Kingston	25	Tony Marshall

Spring Camp was a 7th Epsom Group camp with Beavers, Cubs, Scouts and Explorers attending. We had a great weekend all together, and had some group games and a campfire where we all joined together and participated, but apart from that our programmes run very separately. Camping is fundamental to a Scouts' journey, and hopefully all Scouts had the opportunity to attend at least one of the camps.



I think our Summer Camp was probably one of the most challenging camps I have experienced for many years. We had constant rain for the whole period when we were



Scouts at the top of the Spinnaker Tower in Portsmouth

setting up, and then we spent the rest of the week trying to dry things out. Another bout of constant rain in the middle of the week didn't make things any easier. However, the Scouts showed their true colours and were stoic through all the challenges.

Water Weekend is always a favourite, and a great weekend was had by the Scouts, Explorers and Cubs that were able to attend. Unfortunately, there are limited places, so not everybody is able to attend. Tony Marshall does an amazing job organising this event, and it takes many hours. Transport and ferrying boats and kayaks and equipment takes up a lot of time, on top of all the hours over the weekend. If any parent can offer to transport and tow trailers prior to, and after the event, Tony would be very pleased to hear from you.

We try to offer a varied programme on a Friday night, and I have given details of these evenings as part of the termly newsletters.

Our programme is based on a cycle where each Scout should be able to complete most of the nine challenge badges during their four years with us. This will only happen when Scouts attend every week, as well as doing extra tasks at home, and attending

most of the camps. My hope is that Scouts are proud of all the badges that they receive, recognising the hard work that has gone into them from the Leaders and themselves. Even though most Scouts will not complete their Gold Chief Scout Award, they should wear every badge that they receive with pride. During their four years with us our hope is that they will have fun on their Scout journey, and remember the promise that they made when invested 'to help other people', and to keep the Scout Law.



Epsom Hockey Club hosting an evening for the Scouts

Gillian Mead
Scout Section Leader

EXPLORERS Leader's Report

A year of fabulous experiences!

Summer term is always our quiet term as attendance drops whilst some Explorers take time out to concentrate on their exams. On Friday 5th May we hiked from Boidier Hurst across to Epsom Downs on a beautifully dry evening. Before the hike we stood in a horseshoe and renewed our Scout Vows to our new King in honour of his coronation the next day.

Leader Tom organised an amazing evening when we were joined by the Scouts in Alexandra Park for an evening of sports. This was enjoyed by all! We had a beautiful sunlit evening of kayaking in Godalming with huge thanks to Jill, Alex, Kris and Ben. Other evenings included litter picking through from Horton to Christchurch, cycling up to the Downs, backwoods cooking, and we finished the term with sports and a BBQ at Horton.

Summer Camp was an absolute triumph, wholly organised by Dav (thank you so much). Dav, Aaron, 15 Explorers and I were lucky enough to enjoy the two-centre camp starting and ending at Cricket Campsite, outside Southampton. We travelled on the ferry across the Solent to the Isle of Wight to spend two nights at Corf Camp. The Explorers enjoyed journeying around the island on their Freedom bus passes, a sea cruise to the Needles, hiking, paddling and ice creams. Back on the mainland we were lucky that a visit to the Motor Museum in Beaulieu fitted in to our week's budget too before our return to Epsom and the remainder of the summer holidays.



21 Explorers were alert enough to beat the rush and get themselves a coveted

place on September's Water Weekend – always a massive favourite in everyone's diary. And the weather was beautiful! Autumn term's activities included carving pumpkins, a walk up to the Downs to watch the fireworks across London, dry slope donuts, a quiz and chips night and our annual Christmas party night. We chose Under One Sky as our Charity of the Year one evening at the beginning of term and started our fundraising off by having a bake sale at the Remembrance Church Parade and raised over £200 for them.

The New Year saw the Explorers writing a programme of ice skating, mystery cooking, PowerPoint presentation evening and building their own crazy golf course.

The 7th Epsom Group also held a very successful Quiz Night with the Explorers all volunteering for the evening to serve the food, organise the tables, collect up and score the answer sheets. They also sold a record number of raffle tickets and through this we raised just under £600 for Under One Sky. We are looking forward to meeting them in the summer term to hand over a large cheque.

We've had a welcome return to the leadership team! Previn, who was a leader back in 2017, returned to join us again in January 2024. He has joined our usual crew of Dav, Rich, Dafydd, Aaron, Tom and me in leading our current 27-strong Explorers.

The last few terms we have had some behavioural challenges, so we are hoping that by getting the Explorers, themselves, to write and help organise their own programme will give them all a better ownership of their group – creating a more cohesive atmosphere to benefit us all.

So, I'd like to thank the leader team for their amazing support, (mainly) unwavering enthusiasm, and most of all, the greatest jokes and laughs which helps to keep us all sane and brings us back week after week!!

Phili Coley, Explorer Leader

