

Hampshire Scouts County Annual General Meeting

Date: Sunday 28th June 2026, 2.15pm

Venue: Ferny Crofts, Beaulieu Road, Beaulieu, Hampshire, SO42 7YQ

Minutes

	Item
1	Welcome by the Chair: County Chair Sarah Thomas welcomed the Deputy Lieutenant and distinguished guests, both Civic, Girlguiding and Scouting to the Hampshire Scouts 2026 Annual General Meeting and Annual Review. She hoped that guests enjoyed the opportunity to see some of our young people taking part in a range of activities, a taster of some of the exciting and challenging activities that we offer to our young people and sometimes the adults too! Fire evacuation and muster point instructions were given in case of an emergency.
2	Presentation of the Commander Bruce Awards: This award was introduced after the Bruce family gave some money to Hampshire Scouts from a collection taken at the memorial service of the late Lieutenant Commander Henry V Bruce - a former Chair of Hampshire Scouts - held at Winchester Cathedral. The award is presented annually, and to be considered for the Commander Bruce Award a nominee must have inspired and encouraged others in their 'Scout Section' over a period of time or at a one-off event in a way that makes them stand out 'ahead' of the crowd' in their section. The prizes this year are for £200 in each section; with £100 for the individual, and £100 to go to their Group to invest in new scouting equipment. Our County Youth Lead, Dee Wright chaired this year's Judging panel, and the presentations were made by Finn Bruce on behalf of the Bruce family. The winners were as follows: Squirrel Scouts – George Marande Beaver Scouts – Persephone Milward Cub Scouts – Brodie Higgins – Brodie and his family were unable to attend and so his award was presented at Denmead the night before. Scouts – Callum Leach Explorer Scouts – Charles Bridges
3	Presentation by the Malawi/Gambia International Expedition Team: A presentation by Explorer Scout Joseph Taylor gave AGM guests an insight into the Explorer Malawi trip in August 2025. Working with Go Malawi, a non-profit organisation that partners with rural communities in the Ntchisi and Blantyre districts to relieve poverty through sustainable education, healthcare, conservation, and commerce initiatives.

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	The Team worked on projects including classroom repair, building desks and getting involved with the community, building lifelong friendships and bonds. The group finished their trip with a Safari trip and visit to a beach area.
4	Apologies for Absence: Apologies were received and recorded from 35 people for the meeting; these are listed at the end of these minutes.
5	Gone Home: A time for reflection and to remember those volunteers we have lost this year. The County Remembrance Service will be held at Pinsent Campsite in Winchester on Sunday 27th September 2026 at 2.30pm.
6	Approval of the Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on 29th June 2025: The County Trustee Board have reviewed the minutes of the previous AGM at their meeting held on 15th September 2025. The County Chair put forward these minutes as read and asked the County Scout Council to agree that they are a true record of that meeting. Vote: Approval of the Minutes of the AGM held on 30th June 2024; Proposed by Sarah Thomas and seconded by Martin Rudd. Approval received and Motion carried.
7	Approval of the Constitution for Hampshire County Scout Council (Bespoke Hampshire and Scout Association updated POR May 2025): In line with the recommendation from Scout Headquarters, the County Trustee Board proposed that we adopt the bespoke 2025 Hampshire County Constitution, in line with Chapter 5C.3 of POR (Policy, Organisation and Rules) Vote: for the approval of the June 2025 Constitution for Hampshire County Scout Council; Proposed by Sarah Thomas and seconded by Martin Mackey. Approval received and Motion carried.
8	Membership of the County Scout Council for Hampshire Scouts: The County Scout Council can admit other people to membership. The Chair advised that members of the following organisations are nominated as County Scout Council members: a) Commissioners for the three Girl Guiding Counties of Hampshire b) Leaders (or their representative) of the Local Authorities of Hampshire, Portsmouth and Southampton. c) Hampshire Scouts Youth Council d) Ferny Crofts Staff Members

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	These are to be admitted as members of the County Scout Council as well as the ex officio list in POR Rule 5.6.4 Vote: The Scout Council was asked to accept by a show of hands the members as listed above. Approval received and Motion carried.
9	Acceptance of the Trustees Annual Report and Financial Statements for the year ended 31st December 2025: County Scout Council members were asked to note that the charity's financial year is 01 January to 31 December. The County Trustee Board has approved the 2025 Financial Statement of Accounts and report from auditors Shaw Gibbs of Winchester. County Treasurer Bob Gath compiled a written explanation of the Statement of accounts which is available on the website via the QA code link. There were no questions. Vote: The Scout Council was asked to accept with a show of hands the 2025 Annual Accounts. Approval received and Motion carried.
10	Membership of the Hampshire County Scout Council Trustee Board: The appointment of a Trustee Board was made in order to oversee good governance for the charity over the next year. This was agreed as follows: Agree the number of members that may be appointed to the Trustee Board: Following good practice recommendations from the Charity Governance Code, POR states Trustee Boards should have a minimum of 5, and no more than 12, Trustees in total, including ex officio and co-opted Trustees. The Trustee Board recommends that 12 people are appointed. The County Chair proposed that the County Scout Council approves that recommendation. Vote: to appoint 12 members to the County Trustee Board; Proposed by Sarah Thomas, Seconded by Ian Edwards. Approval received and Motion carried. Agree the Quorum for future meetings of the County Scout Council (excluding the AGM) The County Scout Council was asked to agree its quorum – the minimum number of County Scout Council members that must be present at County Scout Council meetings – as recommended by the Trustee Board as 15 people. Vote: that the County Scout Council Quorum be set at 15 people; Approval received and Motion carried. a. Appointment of the County Chair:

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	The County Chair handed Chairmanship of the meeting to the County Lead Volunteer, Paul Bell. The County Lead Volunteer recommended to the County Scout Council that Sarah Thomas be appointed as County Chair for a further year. Vote: To appoint Sarah Thomas as County Chair as recommended by the Trustee Board; Proposed by Paul Bell. Approval received and Motion carried. The County Lead Volunteer handed chairmanship of the meeting back to the County Chair, Sarah Thomas. b. Appointment of the County Treasurer: The Trustee Board recommends that Robert Gath should be appointed as County Treasurer. Thanks were given to Bob for his work in 2025. Vote: To appoint Robert Gath as County Treasurer as recommended by the Trustee Board; Proposed by Sarah Thomas. Approval received and Motion carried. c. Appointment of other members of the Trustee Board following recommendations from the open selection process initiated by the County Trustee Board. The recommendation to the County Scout Council is that the following volunteers be appointed as members of the County Trustee Board: Paul Hedges, County Team Lead, Support Team Jackie Noakes, New Forest District Dee Wright, County Youth Lead (Ex-officio) Jack Dilly, Basingstoke East District It was noted that Arthur Hide will step down from the County Trustee Board at this point. It was noted that Kerie Wallace, Team Lead Ferny Crofts will be co-opted to the Board at the next CTB as per the County Constitution. It was noted that Joe Biondani will be appointed as Deputy County Chair in September 2026. Vote: To appoint the above-named volunteers to the County Trustee Board; Proposed by Sarah Thomas. Approval received and Motion carried. The County Chair thanked the Trustees for all of their work during the last year and, in particular, those members who are standing down. d. Re-appoint County President and/or Vice Presidents: The Chair advised that Nigel Atkinson Esq is proposed as President and asked for a show of hands as approval.

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	Approval received, and the Chair therefore notes that the Scout Council appoints the County President, Lord Lieutenant the Honourable Nigel Atkinson Esq.
11	Appointment of Auditors On behalf of the County Treasurer Robert Gath, the County Chair proposed that Shaw Gibbs (formerly Martin & Company Audit Limited) of Winchester be appointed as Auditors. The Chair confirmed Shaw Gibbs are qualified for the role. Vote: To confirm the re-appointment of Shaw Gibbs of Winchester as Auditors to hold office until the next Annual General Meeting 2027. Approval received and Motion carried.
12	Elect Representatives of the County Scout Council to represent the County on the Council of the Scout Association: County Representatives are to be elected to the Council of the Scout Association. They will represent and vote on behalf of Hampshire at the National AGM at Gilwell Park. To represent our County Membership, we need to elect One Adult and One Young Person for every 10,000 members. Sarah Thomas, Paul Hedges and Keith Hawkins have been nominated and seconded for the Adult Representation. Arthur Hide and Wiliam Digance have been nominated and seconded to represent the Young People. A show of hands was given for their election.
13	Notification of Elected Youth Representatives: The County Youth Team will be made up of the following: Elliot Brown, Marie Colwell and Oliver Webster. A show of hands was given for their election. The County Chair thanked the outgoing EYRs Joe, Theo and Kara for their service.
14	Address by The County Lead Volunteer Paul Bell: Paul Bell welcomed the Deputy Lord Lieutenant, Regional Commissioner and honoured guests to our Annual Review and Annual General Meeting. The Scout Movement is as relevant today as it has ever been, we strive to help prepare our Young People to take a better place in society. By constantly providing interesting activities and skills, our leaders are ensuring that regardless of how mad the world around us becomes our young people are better equipped to take their places in the society of the future. This year our Census numbers remained fairly static, with a youth membership of 19,139. We had an increase of 231 for Squirrels and increases in both Scouts and Explorers. We did however have a drop in our Beaver and Cub numbers, this does reflect current trends nationally, a dropping birthrate is part of the cause, there is a massive piece of work being

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	undertaken within Scout Headquarters to dig into what has caused this reduction, and as soon as we know anything we can act on it. This year the Scout Association has released a new 9 year strategy, called a “Place to Belong”, it is based around factors such as Program Delivery, Retention of Adult volunteers, Governance, and after a few years of challenges for the Scout Association, caused by the Great Orme tragedy, and other significant issues, it is the opportunity for us to Reset, and celebrate what we have continuing in every Scout meeting location around the country. For our part, we have already held three conferences around the county for our Group Lead Volunteers, showing them around the new MyMembership system, helping them to address issues that they all have in their normal Scouting roles, but more importantly bringing them together to share ideas and meet people that are doing similar roles as themselves. This year we had a fantastic Cub HamJam Camp at Foxlease to celebrate the 110th anniversary of the Cubs starting, we have had Tea Parties all around the county to celebrate 40 years of Beaver Scouts, and in September we have a Squirrel Fun Day here in Ferny Crofts to celebrate 5 years of Squirrel Scouts. With the changes that have happened to Scout Training, our Hampshire Training Team have adapted to the changing needs and are now hosting Skills Training Workshops for adult leaders. None of us are born able to light a fire, erect a tent, or create a balloon helicopter, but these sessions help to skill up our volunteer leaders so that they can inject new ideas into their weekly programs. Next year is the 120th Anniversary of the first Scout Camp, we will be running a badge design competition to have our young members design a badge that can be given to every member on our January 2027 Census and that they can wear it all year round. In addition, we are organizing a Leader’s Skills Weekend in July 2027, that will be part social, part skills learning, and 100% fun. We will be putting the fun fairly, and squarely, back into Scouting. This year, I attended the 6th Gosport (Rowner) Scout Group when they were presented with the King’s Award for Voluntary Service by the Lord Lieutenant of Hampshire. They are one of only 260 volunteer Groups around the country to receive this prestigious award, and one of only three Scout Groups in the country to receive it this year. Congratulations to them. With the changes that are happening within the Scout Association, we must be willing to move with the times and adapt to change. We need to be more positive and look forwards rather than keep on looking back over our shoulders. If we have adult leaders that are not willing to adapt or change, we need to be brave enough to work with them, to help them to either adapt, or move to different roles where they can better use their skills. We have a very diverse and successful County, this is because of the dedication, and time given by our volunteers and supporters. I would therefore like to thank on your behalf, our President, Deputy and Vice Presidents, the Uniformed Leaders, Occasional Helpers, Trustees, and anyone else that helps us to deliver such fantastic Scout experiences to the young people around Hampshire county and I would like to thank the fantastic team that I have working around me, without them and the incredible work that they do, this role

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	would not be manageable. I would also like to extend my thanks to the young people throughout the county, without whom, there would be no fun in this 'hobby' of ours. Paul gave sincere thanks and hopes that guests enjoy the remainder of their day in this lovely part of Hampshire. Awards Presentations: The County Lead Volunteer presented the following awards: Jacqueline Noakes -Bar to the Award for Merit Doug Miller – 15 years Length of Service
15	Address by Deputy Lieutenant – Lady Louisa Portal MBE DL: Lady Louisa sent greetings from the Lord Lieutenant Nigel Atkinson and gave thanks to every person who has made the day possible. It has been a joy to attend and a pleasure to plant the tree in celebration of 50 years of Ferny Crofts. Ferny has a unique atmosphere of joy; memories go back over 30 years when made to go up the climbing wall, even with vertigo! Scouts prepare young people for life; the benefits are huge and what Hampshire does is extraordinarily impressive. Thank were given to everyone who pays a part. Malawi was clearly an amazing trip with warm hearted people, and the Explorers responded with Hampshires spirit of friendliness - congratulations were given to the young people for their enthusiasm, positive energy and being excellent ambassadors. The HSX presentation is looked forward to as they are full of energy and great role models. In 2027 we have WSJ, P27 and Suisse Adventure, a robust selection of trips for our young people to enjoy. Congratulations were passed on to all award recipients; Well done to Doug and Jackie, and it is lovely that Finn Bruce was here to present the Commander Bruce Awards. Scouting has changed lives for 119 years; the opportunities are boundless with more leaders, so please spread to word and recruit.
16	Address by James Palin Esq., Regional Lead, Southeast England: James thanked Hampshire for his invite to the AGM and Review of 2025. 50 Years of Ferny crofts is amazing; he first came as a young cub scout 47 years ago and had an amazing time. James thanked Paul Bell for another remarkable year, where he has witnessed truly inspiring things. The last year or so have not been easy with new systems, structures, titles etc, there have been a lot of changes - but despite all of this people have just got on with it, week on week Volunteers still open doors and continue, and the magic of scouting has never changed. We are now better organised, better supported and getting back to what brought us into scouting initially; we are helping people have amazing experiences. We joined scouting because it changes lives, brings back memories of lighting fires, building things and being outdoors – he is happy that the fun is back in scouting as it changes lives.

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	Thanks were given to every Volunteer, Trustee, Helper and Supporter who has made Scouting possible across Hampshire; 19,000 young people have been given Skills for Life. James is proud to wear his Hampshire scarf and believes the best chapters are ahead of us. He left with a quote – It's not the years in your life that matter, it's the life in your years.
17	HSX Presentation: HSX member Mark Pickering gave a presentation to the AGM on HSX trips to the Brecon Beacons, the Cairngorms and Lake District, which were enjoyed in 2025. Upcoming trips include the Peak District, the Wye Valley and North Wales.
18	Sum up and thanks by the County Chair: Guests were thanked again for joining this annual celebration of Hampshire Scouting and review of 2025 at our wonderful New Forest base, Ferny Crofts. We are so fortunate to have this activity centre and campsite and are delighted to be celebrating the 50th year of Ferny Crofts – guests will have found a badge to take home as a reminder. We will be burying a time capsule in early 2027 to commemorate this 50th year of Scouting at Ferny Crofts. Scouting continues to thrive, be inclusive and bring meaningful experiences to our young people across Hampshire from ages 4 upwards. This demonstrates the importance of offering exciting activities and adventures for our youngest members as well as our teenagers and older members. None of this could be achieved without the commitment and dedication of our volunteers and also the patience and support of the volunteer's families who support Scouting behind the scenes too. During 2025 it has been an absolute pleasure as County Chair to attend camps, events and awards evenings, and of course AGMs. It is delightful to see where volunteers have collaborated on delivering a wide range of diverse Scouting activities to all age groups. 2025 has seen many of our young people involved in UK and overseas expeditions and Jamborees where lasting friendships have been forged. We also commenced the selection and training process for young people and adults for the next World Scout Jamboree in Poland in 2027 and our own County expedition to the USA, Project 27. Thanks were given to the County Office team for their patience and amazing support throughout the year, both to the County Trustee Board but also to our Scout volunteers who reach out to them for assistance. Also, to the Ferny Crofts team and the Communications team for the AGM preparation and support. And finally, thanks are given to thank Paul Bell, County Lead Volunteer for asking Sarah to take the role of County Chair. At a District camp where Paul suggested a stroll around the camp Sarah unwittingly agreed, and from there it was proposed that she considers the County Chair role. Sarah has enjoyed working with Paul over the last four years; there have been challenging times but ultimately, we have strived to ensure that the biggest Scouting County in the UK offers the best that it can to our young people and volunteers.

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	Sincere thanks to Paul for his support to Sarah, both as your County Chair, but also when she was a Group Chair. A final thanks was given once again, for all that is done in Scouting and, until next year's County AGM, guests were asked to stay safe, stay healthy and keep smiling. And to all Trustees – keep having fun!
18	Date of the Next Hampshire County AGM: Sunday 27th June 2027, venue tbc.

Hampshire Scouts County Annual General Meeting 2026 – apologies recorded.

LLT Nigel Atkinson
Mayor of Havant Cllr Paul Tansom

Peter Tudor
Richard Merefield
Robin Peddell
Sarah Anderson
Carolyn Hargreaves
Keith Hawkins
Jack Dilly

Kelly Taylor
Chloe Foster
Lee Lewis
Joan Veal
Robert Lock
Jools Sore
John Mason
Sam Stockall
Angela Knight
Kevin Gillkerson
Paul Cluett
Lester Eyres
Marie Green
Mike Collins
Richard Mendelsohn
Donna Kerrigan
Jon Whitaker
Ellie Selwood
Heather Kirk
Julie Mair
Adrian Mori
Susan Leighs
James Rooke
Leslie Sutton
Arthur Hide