

Hampshire Scouts County Annual General Meeting

Date: Sunday 29th June 2025, 2.30pm

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 2025 AGM and Annual Review. Guests were thanked for joining this annual celebration of Hampshire Scouting and review of 2024. Fire evacuation and muster point instructions were given in case of an emergency.
2	A performance by the Basingstoke Gang Show: The County Chair welcomed the Basingstoke Gang Show, who gave a performance of two songs for the AGM guests.
3	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. Our County Youth Lead, Zara Seymour chaired the Judging panel which consisted of our two Deputy County Youth Leaders, one of our Elected Youth Representatives. The total annual award for distribution is £1,000.00 which will be broken down as follows: • £200 each for each of the sections. • This amount to be split as £100 of the award for each individual & £100 will go to their group to invest in new scouting equipment. To present these Awards was the joint funder of the Cmdr Bruce Awards Mr Simon McCowan who is also a Deputy President of Hampshire Scouts. Simon commented on his involvement with Hampshire Scouts, which spans over 50 years of being involved in our wonderful community of Scouting. He mentioned the transformation of the facilities at Ferny Crofts over the years and how proud he is of the amazing things we have on offer to both Scouts and the community. The winners were as follows:

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	Beaver Scout, GiGi Gibbs (from 3rd Farnborough) – her nominator says: Gigi has shown sheer determination and self-confidence by deciding to take part in a sports relief charity swim, completing 5km over a month. She raised over £1000 in sponsorship money. Gigi showed her perseverance and resilience by continuing to push through the 200 lengths she needed to complete. Cub Scout, Thorin Darch (from 4th Eastleigh) – his nominator says: Thorin has made an inspiring impact on the local area by being an advocate for our environment by creating a 'litter picking equipment library'. He has shown initiative and determination to care for our environment and show others how to do so, leaving a lasting legacy behind him. Scout, William Purver (from 6th Winchester) - his nominator says: - William embodies the scouting values by bringing his excellent, enthusiastic attitude to make a positive contribution each week. He continues to inspire and use his own skills to support fellow scouts with their badges and achievements through all that he does. Explorer Scout, Eleanor Jones (from Basingstoke East District)- her nominator says: Eleanor is incredibly enthusiastic and engaging in everything she does. So far, she regularly undertakes section visits, has run a passport camp and organised and ran a district youth forum. Eleanor continues to play a key role in the running of large district events and has engaged with the National Scouting Strategy at the UK Youth Forum. Explorer Scout, William Digance (from Basingstoke East District) – his nominator says: William is incredibly enthusiastic about engaging regularly with sections and groups in the district. He is also like Eleanor engaged in running large events including the district youth forum. William has also ensured accessibility to camping equipment for everyone by supporting the district's 'Kit Out' project, which created a store of hireable kit for young people. A word from the outgoing County Youth Lead, Zara Seymour: Zara described how incredibly grateful she is for the past 3 years she has had as the County Youth Lead. It's been a privilege to work alongside such passionate, dedicated young people and volunteers who truly live and breathe the values of Scouting. Thanks were given to everyone who supported, challenged, and believed in what we could achieve together. Whilst stepping down from the CYL role, Zara will continue in a new capacity as a District Lead Volunteer for Denewulf and is looking forward to bringing everything she has learned with her, by continuing to support young people and volunteers across our movement.
4	Apologies for Absence: Apologies were received and recorded from 41 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 was held on Sunday 6th April 2025 at Pinsent Campsite, Winchester.

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6	Approval of the Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on 30th June 2024: The County Trustee Board have reviewed the minutes of the previous AGM at their meeting held on 17th September 2024. 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 Martin Rudd and seconded by Paul Bell. Approval received and Motion carried.
7	Approval of the Constitution for Hampshire County Scout Council (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), a link to which was sent to all guests before the AGM. Vote: for the approval of the updated (June 2025) Constitution for Hampshire Scouts; Proposed by Keith Hawkins and seconded by Phil Deverill. 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) Guide 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 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 2024: 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 2024 Annual Report and Statement of accounts and has received the report on the accounts from Shaw Gibbs of Winchester.

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	County Treasurer Bob Gath compiled a written explanation of the Statement of accounts which was included in the link sent to AGM attendees/guests. There were no questions. Vote: The Scout Council was asked to accept with a show of hands the 2024 Annual Accounts. Approval received and Motion carried. The Chair thanked the outgoing County Treasurer John Natt for his time at Hampshire Scouts.
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 Martin Rudd, Seconded by Ian Rowney. 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: 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. 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. b. Appointment of the County Treasurer:

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	Following the resignation of John Natt the Trustee Board recommends that Robert Gath should be appointed as County Treasurer. 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 Vote: To appoint the above-named volunteers to the County Trustee Board; Proposed by Sarah Thomas. Approval received and Motion carried. Kerie Wallace, Ferny Crofts Sub Committee Chair, will be co-opted at the next CTB meeting as per the County Constitution. The County Chair thanked the Trustees for all of their work during the last year and, in particular, those members who are standing down – Zara Seymour, County Youth Lead. 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. 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. 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 2026. Approval received and Motion carried.
12	Elect Representatives of the County Scout Council to represent the County on the Council of the Scout Association:

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	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. Tilly Doncom and Arthur Hide 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: Joe Biondani, Theo Williams and Kara Nash A show of hands was given for their election. The County Chair thanked the outgoing EYRs Isaac Treasure and Jamie Cooper for their service.
14	Address by The County Lead Volunteer Paul Bell: The County Commissioner welcomed the Deputy Lieutenant, Distinguished Guests and Fellow Scouters to our celebration of Scouting around the County. 2024 was both a fantastic, and also a difficult year for Scouting across the County. It has been fantastic in the growth of Squirrel Dreys, where we celebrated opening our 100th Squirrel Drey at our County Squirrel Fun Day. At Census in January, we had 115 Dreys. We are the County in the United Kingdom that has the most Squirrel Dreys, our youngest section for boys and girls from 4 to 6 years old, and this will become the default entry point for children into the Scout Association. If the Drey opening is done correctly, usually adults are more willing to get involved in volunteering with their children at this age. One of our focuses for 2025 will be filling the holes in the county, where we have a Scout Group without a Squirrel Drey, or Sections with low numbers. It has been a difficult year because we are still suffering from the remnants of the Covid years, and now also the cost-of-living issues. It is becoming increasingly more difficult to get adults to commit to becoming a uniformed Leader in our Sections. Everyone is willing to get involved at the edges, however getting full commitment into a uniformed leadership role is a challenge, and getting Adult Leaders to take on volunteer management is even harder. In the Annual Census figures at the beginning of the year Hampshire Scouts remained the largest Scout County in the United Kingdom by a huge margin; the number of young people that we have went down by 1%, to just under 19,000, which believe it or not, is disappointing. We have a fantastic team of Growth and Development Officers in Hampshire, and we have an unlimited potential for recruiting young people (Over 4,000 young people on Want to Join Lists around the County), what limits us is fewer adults who are willing to be adult volunteers. The number of Adult Leaders that we had in the

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	County at Annual Census went down by 5% which is a concern. Overall, our numbers went down by 2% to 25,539, which follows a national trend, however for all of the investment that the Trustee Board are putting into Growth in the County, it is disappointing. As a County we had a brainstorm day where we have assessed how we can address the reduction in adult volunteers, this will become one of the main focuses for us in 2025. Hampshire County Scouts has led the way in offering Mental Health First Aid Courses to our Leaders. Due to the aftermath of Covid, more and more young people and adults are experiencing mental health issues. Hampshire Scouts have mandated that for any international trips the leadership teams must have at least two adults that have taken our Mental Health First Aid training. The training is offered free of charge to leaders in Hampshire Scouts and the costs are met by Hampshire County Scouts. We have spent a long time talking about Transformation, it is all about improving the volunteer's experience when joining the Scout Association. The improvements included a new welcome process for volunteers, but also included updated training, a new Adult Membership system and many other changes that will gradually improve an adult's experience when they volunteer for the Scout Association. The system has not been without issues, and I would like to thank our volunteers for sticking with it, to ensure that we get it to work. Being the Lead Volunteer for a County the size of Hampshire is not an easy task, however it is made easier by the dedication and time given by the volunteers and supporters around the County. I have an amazing County Team, and I am very grateful to have them beside me. I would like to thank our President, Deputy and Vice Presidents, our Civic guests that support Scouts around the County, the Uniformed Leaders, Non-Members, Trustees and everyone else that helps us to deliver such fantastic Scout experiences to the young people around Hampshire. I would also like to extend my thanks to the young people around the County, as long as we have you in our youth sections, it shows that we are doing something right. Many thanks to Sarah Thomas who has now served for three years as our County Chair. I believe we work as a great team. It remains a pleasure and an honour to hold this role, and I am eternally grateful to have this amazing opportunity to be able to influence the Scouting experiences that we can provide to our young people. a. Vice President Nominations: The County Lead Volunteer proposed that Jon Whittaker be nominated as a Vice President. Jon has supported with invaluable HR advice and guidance for our paid staff. Vote: To approve the nominations of Jon Whittaker as a Vice President of Hampshire Scouts. Approval received and Motion carried. b. Awards Presentations: The County Lead Volunteer presented the following awards:

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	Max Edney – Max was awarded the Cornwell Prize for his outstanding efforts in fundraising earlier in the year by Chief Scout Dwayne Fields. The certificate was re-presented in a frame. Steven Edney from the Basingstoke Gang Show was awarded the Award of Merit. Phil Deverill, DLV for Andover, was presented with his Wood Badge. Louis Soccard, Communications Team was awarded a Chief Scout Commendation. Sarah Thomas, County Chair, was awarded the Award of Merit. Ian Rowney, District Chair for Hawk, was awarded the Silver Wolf. Paul Hedges, County Team Lead – Support Team, was awarded the Silver Wolf. Paul manages the County Office, Ferny Crofts and Comms Teams, as well as working with 7th Hook. A Message from UK Scouts Regional Commissioner, James Palin: Dear Friends, I'm very sorry I can't be with you in person today, I have a family commitment that I am unable to miss, but I didn't want the AGM to pass without sending my thanks and best wishes to you all. As Regional Lead for South East England I'm incredibly proud of everything happening here in Hampshire. You continue to lead the way in delivering high-quality scouting, supporting young people with creativity, commitment and care. Even in the face of challenges, you've shown resilience, leadership and a real dedication to the values you share. You are helping to shape a generation of confident, kind and capable young people – and that matters now more than ever. As we continue our transformation journey across the movement, I know Hampshire will be at the forefront- embracing change and ensuring Scouting remains vibrant, welcoming and impactful. Thank you again for all you do. I look forward to seeing many of you soon and wish you a successful and inspiring AGM.
15	Address by Deputy Lieutenant – Lady Louisa Portal MBE DL: Lady Louisa sent greetings from the Lord Lieutenant Nigel Atkinson, and his thanks to every person who has made the day possible. Reading through the Annual Review Magazine she was struck by the innovation shown, with young people central to everything – more events, more activities, more fun – which says it all. Congratulations were given to the County Bruce Award winners and all who were nominated. These awards are a highlight each year and a real feather in the cap. Also, to the Good Service Awards recipients, put your certificates up and tell everyone what you have done. She recently did all of the E-Learning courses and these were a good reminder of our core values – integrity, respect and others. Thanks to the Leaders, Uniformed helpers and young people who live these values. Scouting is also increasingly connected to the Community, thanks to Martin Rudd.

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	Our positive message shines through; We have 115 Squirrel Dreys, our Gangshows sparkle, our Beavers and Cubs are awesome, our Scouts are Adventurous, and our Explorers love Chaos and fishing! More and more young people are attending big International Trips, but the Scouting journey all starts with our core activities and the weekly meetings at local Scout Groups which are as relevant as ever. Our message is clear – welcome to our world. Lady Louisa finished with a quote from Sir David Attenborough; When asked whether there is something he experienced as a child that he wishes teenagers could today, Attenborough says: 'Getting lost.'
16	Explorer Belt Presentation: Sav and Ruby gave a presentation on their Explorer belt 10-day expedition to Denmark. This consisted of 1 major project, 10 minor projects and 50 hours of travelling via foot, public transport, canoeing and cycling. They described the Explorer Belt as an incredible opportunity to get involved with different cultures and improve confidence, both in and outside the World of Scouting! Highlights included meeting other Scouts from all over the world - it felt pretty daunting completing such a huge expedition, but it was comforting to know that there were so many others feeling the same way as me! Also cooking fun meals and laughing about less successful ones, it really was an adventure everyone should experience. Many great times and funny moments were had on the expedition, but the best times were together working as a team, one of these instances was in Copenhagen when we met a lovely native man called Stefanu who informed us on the sustainability of the city. Also, LEGOLAND!
17	Sum up and thanks by the County Chair: Sarah thanked guests again for joining in this annual celebration of Hampshire Scouting: This year has seen continued growth in the numbers of young people joining Scouting in Hampshire and we hope to maintain this trend, this could not be achieved without the commitment and dedication of our volunteers, and also the patience and support of their families. During 2024 it has been an absolute pleasure to attend camps, events and awards evenings, and of course AGMs. 2024 has seen the embedding of the Transformation process initiated by scout HQ in 2023, which has delivered changes to operational and governance processes. We are all committed to ensuring our young people remain blissfully unaware of the issues encountered – from a governance perspective, certain proof that Trustees can and do have more fun! Thanks were given to the County Office Team for their patience and support throughout the year, to the County Trustee Board and the volunteers who reach out to them for

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	assistance, and to the Ferny Crofts Team and Comms Team who helped with the AGM preparation and support. Finally thanks to everyone for all that you do in Scouting and a message to stay safe, stay healthy, and keep smiling as people will wonder what you are up to...! AGM concluded at 3.45pm.
18	Date of the Next Hampshire County AGM: Sunday 28th June 2026, venue tbc.

Hampshire Scouts County Annual General Meeting 2025 – apologies received.

Ashley, Claire

Atkinson, Nigel

Bradley, Tony

Brakewell, Gordon

Cluett, Paul

Cooper, Jamie

Day, Peter

Dorn, Chris

Fraser, Jim

Flux, Jenny

Gamm, Matt

Gerrey, Eric

Harvey-Ross, Malcolm

Hiscock, Andy

Holmes, Connor

Hughes, Mike

Leighs, Susan

Lovegrove, Anne

Mackey, Martin

Mann, Carol

Marshall, Scott

Mendelsohn, Richard

Millen, David

Moseley, Fiona

Napier, Sarah

Nightingale, Chris

O'Shea, Sheridan

Palin, James

Redfearn, James

Rutland, Mark

Salisbury, Melissa

Sore, Jools

Stockall, Sam

Sutton, Claire

Taylor, Kelly

Whittaker, Jon

Whittington, Rob

Williams, Eric

Winter, Sian

Cllr Munazza, Faiz

Mayor Cllr Clubley, Louise

Worshipful Mayor of Rushmoor

Mayor of Gosport