

Sunday July 13th 12:00 to 12:45
Staplehurst Scout Centre Nicholson Walk

1. Introduction and welcome

Bill Best, from the Chair, welcomed members of the Group Scout Council and guests. The Chair then outlined the role of the Scout Council for this meeting and reminded attendees to sign the register.

2. Apologies for absence

The Chair had received apologies from Warren Carter (Trustee), Edwin Burnham (Scout Leader) and Adam Best (Cub Leader) for their absence. The meeting accepted these apologies and the above were duly added to the Scout Council. All three had asked the Chair to vote on their behalf at the meeting.

The Chair noted the Group Scout Council can admit other people to membership. The Chair advised that those names listed at the end of these minutes were nominated as Group Scout Council members for the purpose of this meeting only. These are to be admitted as members of the Group Scout Council as well as the ex-officio list in POR Rule 5.4.4

Noting the meeting was quorate, the Chair opened the meeting.

3. Governance topics

The Chair explained that the purpose of the first part of the meeting was to make sure the charity's foundations are in good order. The annual report from the Trustee Board to the Scout Council had been posted on the group's website with a link to this included on the agenda.

3a. Approve the minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on 14th July 2024

The Chair informed the meeting that the Trustee Board had reviewed the minutes of the previous AGM. The Chair proposed that these minutes be taken as read and asked the Group Scout Council to agree to them as a true record of that meeting.

On a show of hands, the Scout Council then approved the minutes.

3b. Adopt the model constitution from Policy, Organisation and Rules (POR)

The Chair explained to the meeting that it was considered good practice to confirm adoption of the group's constitution. In line with the recommendation from The Scout Association, the Group Trustee Board proposes that we adopt the model constitution from Chapter 5 of Policy, Organisation and Rules. A link to the relevant part of the document was included in the agenda to the meeting and the document is also available on the Scout Association website.

On a show of hands, the constitution was approved.

3c. Note the Group's financial year (April 1st to March 31st)

The Chair asked the Group Scout Council members to please note our charity's financial year is 1st April to March 31st. The Chair told the meeting that the Trustee Board would be reviewing the financial year to see if it would be beneficial to align the financial year to the Group's term calendar but any change would be brought to the Scout Council next year. No vote was required on this matter.

3d. 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 five, and no more than twelve Trustees in total. This includes ex officio and co-opted Trustees.

The Group Scout Council must agree on the number of people to be appointed to the Trustee Board. This currently stands at six. The Trustee Board recommends that a change to nine Trustees will help the Group administration to be more effective. The Chair proposed that the Group Scout Council approve the recommendation to increase the Trustee Board to a maximum of nine members.

On a show of hands this was approved by the Scout Council.

3e. Agree the quorum for future meetings of the Group Scout Council (excluding this AGM)

The Chair explained that the Group Scout Council must agree to its quorum – this is the minimum number of Group Scout Council members that must be present at a Group Scout Council meeting for it to be quorate. The current quorum is set at fifteen people. The Trustee Board recommends no change to this.

The chair then asked the Group Scout Council to approve the recommendation that the minimum number of members remain at 15.

On a show of hands this was approved by the Scout Council.

4. Review of the previous year

4a. The Group Lead Volunteer's review of Scouting Year in Staplehurst.

The Chair explained to the meeting that the Group Lead Volunteer role remains vacant and as such, under the constitution, the role is undertaken by the District Lead Volunteer. The Chair introduced Alex Dawes to the meeting and explained that as Alex has not been with the Group for very long, it was better that each section leader gave the meeting a brief review of activities from the past year.

Before this Alex presented a thirty year service certificate to Frances Best. The meeting was told that Adam Best is being awarded a 20 year service certificate which, in his absence,

will be handed over at a Cubs meeting soon. The Chair, and the meeting at large, offered a round of applause to both Frances and Adam..

The annual report contains a good review of the progress being made by the charity in each of its sections and the Chair encouraged members to read this if they had not already done so.

Mark Jeffery gave a review of the Scout Troop year, Frances Best did the same for Eagle Cubs and Lindsay Oakes reviewed the year for Squirrels and Beavers.

Lindsay concluded by awarding the young people of Squirrels and Badges with their well earned badges for activities completed in the last term. In addition there were two significant awards achieved by Squirrels and Beavers. There was the Earth Tribe badge, working on the environment within the village and the Wimpy Fields. In addition there was the Circus Badge for teaching the Squirrels and Beavers lots of fun new skills that they will turn into a fantastic show.

Staplehurst Squirrels and Beavers are the first two sections to earn these two badges.

The meeting expressed their appreciation and thanks to the section leaders with a well deserved round of applause.

4b. Receive and consider the Annual Report of the Group Trustee Board, including the annual Statement of the Accounts

The Chair noted that the Group Trustee Board has prepared the Trustee's Annual Report which includes the statement of accounts. Copies of the statement of accounts were also made available to the meeting. The Trustee Board has received and considered the report on the accounts from the Surtineer. The Chair reminded the meeting that the Annual report is still available on the Staplehurst Scouts web site.

The Chair explained to the meeting that efforts throughout the past year to recruit a new Treasurer had, until very recently, been unsuccessful and as a consequence the Chair had also filled the role of Treasurer for the past period. The Trustee Board and District Treasurer had noted that although this is not a satisfactory state of affairs, it was a pragmatic solution which allowed the Group to continue to function. The Chair then gave an overview of the key points from the accounts.

Income for the year to 31st March 2025 amounted to £13,286 (£14,245 in 2024) and expenditure was £18,022 (£13,863 in 2024). Increased rent, energy, capitation, and insurance costs continued to put pressure on the Group finances. The Group decided at the beginning of the year to use £3,531 of reserves to balance the budget for the year but there was still an additional overspend at year end of £978. This deficit will be met with existing reserves. The overspend was attributable in part to the increased costs mentioned above and the exceptional cost of tree maintenance in and around the Scout Centre. The Treasurer said that the gift aid application for subscriptions taken in 24/25 has not yet been submitted and had this money been received it would have allowed the budget to be balanced. This money is not lost and the Trustee Board will be progressing the gift aid claim for last year and for this year.

Members can greatly help the finances of the Group by signing a gift aid form.

Cash in our current account at the end of the reporting period stood at £10,366 and our savings account after interest stood at £12,072, bringing our total reserves to £22,592 including £154 cash in hand. (£27,193 in 2024). The Trustee Board consider the financial position of the Group to be healthy but decided in conjunction with the Group Leadership Team that our level of member subscription (subs) needed to be reviewed.

After a lengthy period of over 10 years in not raising subs, the Group has reluctantly decided to raise subs paid by members for 2025/26. Subs have increased for the current year by £1 per meeting and will now be £4.50 per meeting (£3 for Squirrels). Sibling discounts will continue. This will increase our revenue by £3,500 over a full year and enable the Group to produce a balanced budget for 2025/26. The balanced budget contains a measure of additional fundraising which we think is manageable and in line with money raised in previous years.

The Group's policy on reserves is to hold sufficient resources to continue the charitable activities of the Group should income and fundraising activities fall short. The Trustee Board considers that the Group should hold a sum equivalent to 15 months' running costs of approximately £12,000.

5. Making appointments

The Chair moved the meeting on to organise the setup of the charity until the next AGM. This begins with the appointment of any new Trustee Board members to oversee good governance for the charity over the next year. The Trustees appointed at last years' AGM, William Best, Warren Carter, Martin Ralph, Martin Heasman and Serena Hoadley have all agreed to continue as Trustees under their three year term of appointment.. William Best will continue for a further year as Chair of the Trustee Board. David George stood down as a Trustee in January 2025.

The Chair notes that the Group Lead Volunteer (currently the District Lead Volunteer) is an ex-officio member of the Board of Trustees.

The move towards creating a new 'volunteer army' in Scouting goes hand in hand with attracting more younger people to get involved and to take an interest in the Trustee Board as well. One of the missions of the Trustee Board will be to replace themselves with a new younger variety of Trustees!

5a. Appoint the Group Treasurer.

The Chair explained to the meeting that following an open selection process agreed by the Trustee Board a recommendation to the Scout Council is being made to appoint Chris Hutchinson as Treasurer for a three year term.

On a show of hands this was approved.

5b. Appoint new members of the Group Trustee Board

The Trustee Board is making a recommendation to the Scout Council to appoint Sue McLaughlin to the Board of Trustees for a three year term.. Sue volunteered to become a Trustee following the recruitment process for the new Treasurer.

On a show of hands this was approved.

5c. Appoint the Scrutineer for 2025/26

The Trustee Board confirms that Karen Sheppard has been proposed, seconded and is qualified for the role of Scrutineer and is willing to undertake it.

On a show of hands this was approved.

The Chair thanks the members of the Trustee Board for their work during the year.

6. Closing remarks

Before closing the Chair opened the meeting to any final comments or questions from those in attendance.

The Chair expressed his personal thanks, and that of the Trustee Board for all the work done by our leaders and their assistants and their helpers over the last year. Scouting in Staplehurst just would not happen without them. Their work extended to 'above and beyond' and included raising money for children's local charities. Parent help in supporting these fund-raising activities was also much appreciated. The Chair also thanked our unpaid cleaners whose work is often under appreciated.

The Scout Council gave a round of applause in appreciation to the commitment of all the section leaders and their teams in making scouting fun for all the young people who attend.

And with that, the Chair closed the meeting.

Signed.....

Scout Council 2025

William Best	Trustee and Chair
Alex Dawes	District Lead Volunteer
Martin Ralph	Trustee
Serena Hoadley	Trustee
Martin Heaseman	Trustee
Cathy Mummery	Kent County Support Team
Frances Best	Cub leader
Vanessa Johnson	Cub leader
Neil Emberley	Scout Leader
Mark Jeffery	Scout leader
Lindsay Oakes	Squirrel and Beaver Leader
Donna Elliott	Squirrel and Beaver Leader
Mandy Hallett	Squirrel and Beaver Leader
David Burgess	Squirrel and Beaver Helper
Julia Burgess	Squirrel and Beaver Helper
Saun Gardiner	Beavers
Neil Venter	Squirrels
Mazim Tecuta	Beavers
Katie Crowe	Beavers
Stephen Crowe	Beavers
Emily Moon	Cubs & Beavers
Sophie Hoppe	Squirrels
Charles Culshaw	Squirrels
Shannon Delanhunty	Squirrels
Sherrie Delanhunty	Squirrels
Claire d'Cruze	Beavers
James Griffiths	Squirrels
Clare Griffiths	Squirrels
Doreen Braganza	Girlguiding Staplehurst
Emma Culshaw	Parent
Kayley Rampton	Parent
Reiss Rampton	Parent
Lawrence Jones	Parent Beaver
Hannah Matthews	Squirrels
Chris Hutchinson	Trustee elect
Sue McLaughlin	Trustee elect
Warren Carter	Trustee (with apologies accepted)
Edwin Burnham	Scout leader (with apologies accepted)
Adam Best	Cub leader (with apologies accepted)