



Gloucestershire County Scouts

A 'lite' review of the year 2020 – 21



Gloucestershire Scouts annual review 2021

Note from the editor (The CC)

So, this year, based on several factors, this annual review is much shorter than in previous years. You could probably guess at some of the reason why, but there are other factors too which remind me of the amazing and important work that you all do, week to week, month to month and year after year.

The biggest reason this edition is so light, is because the previous twelve months, ravaged by lockdowns due to the pandemic has meant that there has been significantly less activity for me personally to report on.

I know there has been so much going on, but I have been unable to draw all of that together to fill out this annual review, mostly down to my second reason. Work and home life.

Scouting used to be known as 'just a hobby', a pastime, but I know that for many, many of you out there that it is much more than that. It is a life in itself, bringing friends and family around us with shared interests and lots of enjoyable times.

This past year in particular, although I have been busier at work, it has also been my busiest year in my Scouting history, with many key areas needing focus and support.

You might be reading this, thinking, "oh, there, there, stop snivelling", which I would completely understand. In fact, it is because of this that I recognise more than ever the work that so many of you have to do to keep Scouting as great as it is for so many young people. You all have your own work, study, home and family lives, all of which in the grand scheme of things should take a priority over what we do in Scouting.

After all, as enjoyable as Scouting is, it will not pay your bills, as time consuming as Scouting is, it will never help keep your home clean and maintained, and as important as our Scouting family is, we must make sure we focus our times on those relationships that are most important to us, often our families.

With all the past 18 months, one thing has become abundantly clear to me personally, and that is the need for human connection.

As useful and as productive as Zoom calls and meetings have been for me, it has often meant that I have tried squeezing multiple meetings in an evening when I am not having to travel anywhere. Useful, but I am not sure it has been 100% helpful, and I imagine the same is true for many of you reading this.

In a world
of algorithms
hashtags
and followers,
know the true importance
of human connection.

When I first got to meet with a group of adults in July, we were out at our wonderful Cranham Scout Centre, there were young people playing and enjoying the outdoors, it was refreshing, inspiring even and reminded me that Scouting is not best conducted behind a screen, but more in the open in the company of other brilliant like-minded people.

As Robert Baden-Powell said (adapted) "[Scouting volunteers \[Scoutmasters\] need the capacity to enjoy the out-of-doors.](#)" And with this, I hope that you are able to do just that, if not right now, very soon.

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My highlights

In a year filled with challenge and difficulty there have been some absolute highlights, a few of which I have listed here

- Enabling young people and adults to come together (albeit virtually) to remember as part of our Remembrance Day event.
- Being awarded the Silver Acorn. Genuinely very surprised, very thankful and very humbled by this.
- Helping to organise the County awards event where we had Jake Meyer and Tim Kidd share inspiring words with us. (Read more later).
- Getting to join numerous groups for Zoom investitures or Zoom camp at homes. I got to be a superhero and (don't tell anyone) Father Christmas.
- Giving awards to many deserved adults including the President in Cotswold District – Reg Poulton who has supported Scouting locally for so very long.
- Presenting Chief Scouts Awards to some amazing young people

NEVER EVER FORGET, EVEN FOR ONE MOMENT, HOW TRULY AMAZING YOU ARE

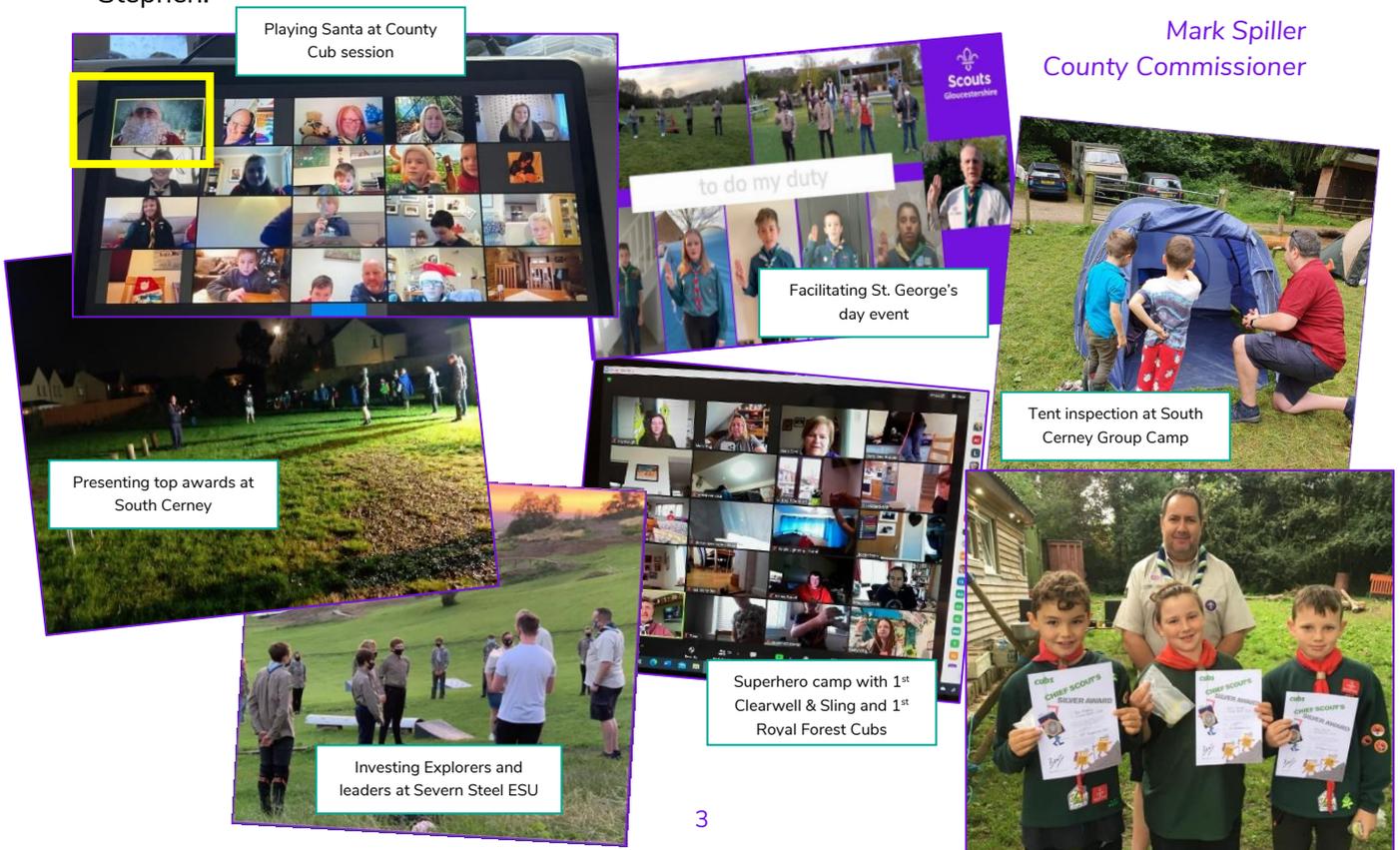
And then there is my most favourite thing to do, the one I don't get to do very often, and that is to meet with young people, listen to their amazing stories and fun adventures and to remind them to say thank you to you, our leaders, managers and supporters who make it all possible.

If you want me to come along, please send me an invite, I am happy to travel anywhere in the County and if I am available, I will be there.

Finally, I'd like to take this opportunity to say thank you to my brilliant team who have counselled me, supported me, encouraged me and generally been very brilliant. So, a huge thank you to Carole, Chris, Liz, Louise, Kat and Stephen.

Thank You!

Mark Spiller
County Commissioner



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PROGRESS TO VISION 2020

When we launched our County Vision in 2017, it was with the complete intention to have achieved most of our aims and be in the process of evolving our vision to see us through the next few years. Then 2020 happened!

We have again made some good progress on our journey and we should recognise all that we have achieved through the past 12 months.

This Annual Review once again aims to inform you of our activity as well as progress to our vision. You will see a short article about each of our key areas, focused around our core development areas of Youth Involvement, Programme, People and Projects, as well as our two biggest investments – Cranham and the 3 Counties Development project.



Highlights have included:

- **Training** – We have spearheaded an approach to take our face to face training and make it available online. Not just through eLearning modules but through engaging, discussion led workshops too. We have also launched a new booking system, making it easier for you to book onto.
- **Some great self-led activities** – With the pandemic putting a halt to much of face to face Scouting events like Shirehike and Cotswold Marathon enable young people to continue to get out and explore the Great Outdoors
- **Cranham** – Our next most valuable resource, second only to our volunteers, has had the opportunity to continue to grow and develop even though it has been hit by closure due to the pandemic.
- **A continued focus on compliance training** – We have made significant progress in this area, which is thanks to all of you.

Alone we can do
so little,
together we can do
so much.

- Helen Keller -

So, what can you expect to read in this shorter edition? Here are the **contents**:

[Youth Involvement](#)

[Projects](#)

[People](#)

[Programme](#)

HAPPY READING!



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YOUTH INVOLVEMENT

It's been a very busy year for the youth commissioner team over the last 12 months. We have welcomed two new deputy county youth commissioners to our team – **Harry Gibbens and Brooke Martin**. Although they have only been in role for a few months, they have brought lots of ideas and enthusiasm to our team!

Recently they have helped me hold a successful media day for our Youth Commissioners to create some content for our website and social media. You may have seen some pictures from the day already and there are videos on the way soon!

Now, as we enter a new term and year, we are excited to share with you a new badge and some projects we are focusing on.



You Shape Award

This national award has been in development for a few years and on 5th October the much-anticipated launch will be here! The aim of the award is to embed Youth-Shaped Scouting into all aspects of the programme and make it easier for Leaders to involve the young people.

This award will be a segmented badge (like the young leader mission badges) comprised of a central badge and three outer badges. The outer badges are split into themes: Plan, Lead and Represent.

There are criteria for each badge, and they get progressively more challenging through the sections.



This is a unique award as the young people decide how many and which criteria they complete and when they have completed the badge. This makes the badge 100% youth-shaped!



Over the next few months, our Youth Commissioners will be promoting the award and sharing ideas for how to help young people achieve it. If you would like any help with delivering the award, please get in touch with your District Youth Commissioner or go to the Scout website for all the information and resources.

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We will also be releasing some of our own resources to help section leaders.

Links:

- [YouShape Award](#) – Scouts
- [Youth Shaped Scouting](#) – GScouts – Gloucestershire Scouts

County-wide projects

Our Youth Commissioner team are currently working on our own projects for the County as well as promoting national campaigns.

The three projects we are currently working on are:



Youth Commissioners – Never shy of a camera!

Mock Executives: This promotes the national aim to have at least two 18-25 years olds on every executive committee. Our project aims to educate young people on the role and importance of executive committees so that once they reach the age of 18, they are more likely to consider taking a trustee role.

Explorer forums: As a County which has many young members, we would like to be as Youth Shaped as possible. Currently, most of the

opportunities for young people to shape their programme happen at a unit level but we would like this to expand to District and County levels as well.

We are looking to start a forum structure – initially for the Explorer section – that will span all three levels and feed into each other. This will give us a pool of young people to go to for feedback on events and programme ideas.

Young Leaders: We are currently working with Mark Westwood (ACC Young Leaders) to revamp the county's approach to young leaders. Our role in this is to make sure that the project is youth-led and is shaped by young leaders from across the county.

If you would like more information or are interested in any of our projects, please get in touch with your local youth commissioner or the project leaders:

- County Youth Commissioner - Kat Holter, kat.holter@gloucestershire-scouts.org.uk
- Deputy County Youth Commissioner (Project Lead Explorer Forums) - Brooke Martin, brooke.martin@gloucestershire-scouts.org.uk
- Deputy County Youth Commissioner (Project Lead Young Leaders) - Harry Gibbens, harry.gibbens@gloucestershire-scouts.org.uk



Youth Commissioners – Also enjoying a cuppa!

We are hoping that all of these exciting projects and badges will help to reinvigorate youth shaped Scouting in Gloucestershire and are looking forward to working with Leaders and Young People across the County.

Kat Holter
County Youth Commissioner

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PROJECTS

This year has been another changing year, but together as County we and a County team we have worked to deliver some projects and activities. They include:

Remembrance Day

On 8th November 2020, our County Commissioner, Mark led the county's Act of Remembrance via You Tube. A reflective time of remembering all those who have served and sacrificed their lives in wars and conflicts was observed.



Scout members played the last post, flags being lowered across the county representing all section flags and the Royal British Legion flag, with two minutes silence being observed.

A montage of poppies made by young people from various products from food to built blocks were shown.

Mark ended the time with thanks for everyone who contributed to this important act of remembrance despite the limitations imposed with Covid restrictions.

Adult Awards Evening

On Thursday 25th March, we invited over 150 Good Service and Outstanding Service Awards recipients to come together to celebrate all of their work and service.

We came together with over 60 volunteers to say "Thank You".

Our UK Chief Commissioner, Tim Kidd joined us and said a huge thank you, recognising all of the work that the many brilliant volunteers do on a regular basis.



We were also joined by Jake Meyer, British Mountaineer and Adventurer who was a Cub Scout in Cotswold District and the inspiration for the name of Meyer Explorer Scout Unit. Jake gave a really inspiring talk sharing his experiences and how thanks to the encouragement of some, he was able to go on and achieve so much.

Our County Commissioner then told a story of how words that are used by so many of our volunteers inspired him to go on and achieve more than was thought possible. Those words being "You can do it".

We shared some videos of young people expressing their thanks and concluded with the [Roll of Honour](#).

St. George's Day- Renewal of Promises Event

Sunday 25th April, saw all young people and volunteers welcomed by Mark on You Tube to renew our promises. Mark presented a reflection on the past year and promises were renewed with the help of young people and section ACC's.

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The story of St George and the Dragon was portrayed and served to remind us the bravery in the face of adversity and challenge, perhaps noted and resonating with many over the past year with Covid.

My thanks go to Mark for his immense time and commitment to preparing, recording and presenting not only these events but the many updates over the past 18 months, keeping us updated and linked with support through this wonderful movement of Gloucestershire Scouts.

Liz Hodge
DCC – Projects

PEOPLE

I don't know about anyone else, but this year's review seems to have come around very quickly. Probably because we have still been Scouting through some challenging times.

Firstly, I need to say a very big thank you to all my team – you will hear more about them later. Without their support and diligence throughout the 3rd lockdown to our current position of GREEN, we would not be where we are with training, validation, inclusion, and 1st Aid.

If I can refer to our vision where we said we wanted to have all adults feeling supported, engaged, and able to undertake their roles, I think that yet again through these unprecedented times, all our adults have risen to the challenge.

Vetting and appointments processes did have to take a step back initially, but since the early this year HQ brought back the vetting team and the Districts and Groups recommenced their appointment committees mainly online to start with but now gradually more and more face to face.

With **mandatory and initial training** all going online this has made it easier for all our adults to undertake their training. We have worked with adults to ensure that those who may not be computer literate or have concerns about using the computer to give them the support they need and help them to complete their training.

Wood beads have been validated and are now coming through the system for those adults who have taken the opportunity to complete their training. Special thanks to the training team and validators who have been so industrious in making this happen.

In fact, we have had 70 Wood Badges achieved in the past 12 months an increase of 60% compared to the previous year.



The capacity to learn is
a *gift*; the ability to
learn is a *skill*; the
willingness to learn is a
choice.

Brian Herbert

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I have seen how our adults have been **recognised for their contributions to Scouting**, not simply with their service awards, but also with DC commendations, and the HQ awards that have been applied for by their peers and line managers. Since September 2020, across our county we have awarded

- 12 x Chief Scouts Commendation for Good Service
- 28 x Award for Merit
- 7 x Bar to the Award for Merit
- 1 x Silver Acorn



We now have a **county inclusion team** up and running who have already been talking to leaders about how they can adapt programmes, games and badges to ensure all our young people and adults can experience Scouting to its fullest. My thanks to **Gary Law** for taking on the role of ACC Inclusion and his new team.

1st Aid Training was a worry for me to start with, but we managed to train over 150 people for Module 10a and have now with the help of our CTM Lewis signed up for the new blended version that will commence shortly.

Thanks must go to **Shell Vaughan, Dave Bunce and Eve Guyll**. We are also now arranging a 16-hour first aid course to enable us to have more trainers on board. Watch this space.

Our CTM **Lewis** year. We have a new explored and has engaged with all



Whilst doing all this in being appointed to Commissioner for and huge

Unfortunately, this coming months as for someone to replace him. In the meantime, please congratulate Lewis if you see him. He will still support us with training as and when time allows so we will still see him around.

Dangerfield has also worked wonders this last smarter look to the training webpages. He has implemented the new booking system and he the LTMs.

he also applied for and was hugely successful be the new UK Leadership team as the UK Programme. A fantastic opportunity for Lewis congratulations for being successful.

means that Lewis will be stepping down in the our CTM so Mark and I will be starting a search for someone to replace him. In the meantime, please congratulate Lewis if you see him. He will still support us with training as and when time allows so we will still see him around.

Looking forward we will be rolling out the new equality and inclusion strategy across the County. Mental Health will be one of my priorities for this coming year and a continuation of support to all leaders.

Please feel free to contact me on anything people related.

Carole
DCC-People



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PROGRAMME

For the vast majority of this report, Covid restrictions have been in place, and it has been amazing to see across the county people trying out and developing online programme offerings.

I was able to attend several sessions from:

- an interactive Queen Scout Award presentation to cubs,
- quiz and game sessions for scouts
- more escape rooms that you can imagine on every topic imaginable
- and two very informative talks one about space and one about forensic science.



As a county, we even managed to run **some virtual sessions for Cubs** who were not able to access the programme in the normal way.

As the year went on it was great to see Scouting move into Amber and then Yellow measures and face to face scouting return and again seeing the ingenuity and creativity of our leaders to adapt and amend their programme to be able to provide Covid safe environment for young people to thrive in.

We saw some fantastic events happen, even though we could not meet face to face. Including:

Shirehike 2020 – Run by our colleagues in Hereford and Worcester, in partnership with several other Counties, this activity enabled young people to get out into the Great Outdoors to hike different length hikes and achieve a badge, either Bronze, Silver or Gold. In total 226 badges were earned by young people in Gloucestershire. Well done!!



Another hiking activity was the **Cotswold Virtual Marathon**, a staple of the Scouting Calendar for Scouts, Explorers, Network and keen volunteers, the Cotswold Marathon was no different to any other large event with the pandemic curtailing this brilliant activity.



Nonetheless, the amazing team brought it to life virtually with the ability for walkers to take part in the 10, 20 or 30 mile hikes by foot, by bike or even by swimming. Over 17,000 miles were travelled in this amazing event organised by Gloucester Scouts.



Cotswold Marathon is back and in person, on the 12th February 2022

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Finally, as we headed to summer 2021 it was amazing to see scouting get to a place where expeditions were able to take place with a return to home element and then as full residential experience giving the opportunity for young people to continue working towards their Top Awards.

It was also amazing to see so many groups plan and provide some form of summer camp, after so many nights away at home, I know from personally my daughter was very excited, as I am sure many other young people across the count were, to be able to attend her summer camp.



The World Jamboree 2023 Leadership team:
Lucy, Steve, Chris and Peter

Through the Spring we have been able to attract and recruit our teams leading 36 young people to the World Jamboree in South Korea in summer 2023, and the team leading the Gloucestershire contingent to the Haarlem Jamboreette in summer 2023, giving the opportunity for hopefully over 100 young people to experience life-changing experiences through great Scouting.

As we returned to Scouting in September there has been a lot of great things starting to happen in the county, plans are in place for some exciting international trips with Haarlem 2023 and 25th WSJ 2023 both taking place alongside local event like BEAST, JOTI/JOTA, and S&E in 2022 all showing, as always, that Gloucestershire Scouting has lots of programmes to offer as we continue to support and inspire young people to have amazing balanced programmes.

Chris Meadows
DCC – Programme



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CRANHAM SCOUT CENTRE



CRANHAM SCOUT CENTRE

It's certainly been a year of challenges with COVID-19, from furlough to no overnight residential. When it became clear that it wasn't going to be normal times, we undertook with the support of the Executive to start making some improvements to the site and buildings.

We've improved the site access, so it's now wide enough for two-way traffic and enables coaches to access the car park. This has reduced traffic being blocked on the main road through the village and means less disruption for residents.

We've moved the office from its old location to the cottage living room. This provides better facilities and a more usable space. It's also freed up space for us to extend the main centre dining room.



While altering the layout we've also taken the opportunity to improve the insulation in the ceiling and update the heating. The space is now lighter and warmer all year round.

We held our **volunteers' days** and had an amazing turnout. A huge thanks to everyone who came, we got a fantastic number of jobs completed. We'll be organising more in the future. In the meantime, if you want to help in any way just get in touch, there's always an opportunity to make a difference!

In addition to making some big changes at the site we've also been welcoming in record numbers of evening activity groups. While it's been great to see and hear so many groups on site again it wouldn't have been possible without our wonderfully friendly and helpful management team; **Cal, Ruth,** and our regular volunteers **Louise Slee, Dave Purser and Dave Herbert.**

While bookings have been impacted by COVID the financial results when you consider furlough payments and covid support payments we managed to come out with a smaller loss than expected of just under £10k. The next financial year will be challenging as lockdown as restrictions impacted the peak camping season. Winter indoor bookings are looking strong and we're preparing to resume outdoor improvement works ready for the 2022 season.



We look forward to you seeing the changes we've made and the one's that we have planned and look forward to welcoming you back onto **your** campsite soon.

Colin Steward
Chair – Cranham Management Committee

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THREE COUNTIES DEVELOPMENT PROJECT

We continue to work with teams from the South West Development team, as well as Avon and Somerset Scouts supported by a grant from the Scout Grants Committee, match funded by Gloucestershire Scouts.

We have been very lucky to have this team on board because, quite simply without them Scouting would not be happening in some parts of the County.

Here are two examples of groups that they have been working with

1st Lechlade Scout Group (Cotswold District)

1st Lechlade had previously been quite a popular group but in recent year has seen the membership decline, with the leaving of the GSL and remaining leaders during Covid lockdowns, the Three Counties Team were asked to support the group, initially with 'keep warm' activities for the young people that wanted to remain involved. They also developed an active Facebook page and grew the following of families.



Next steps for the project was to identify and recruit new leaders, they did this through advertising in prominent places including the Library which was free for two weeks. This was a great a positive talking point for the young people and adults in the community, resulting in the attraction and recruitment of a number of adult volunteers, not just for the leadership team but for the Group Exec too.

New leader! Emma: Beavers Leader
I've been in Lechlade for 13 years, having lived near Gatwick for 12 years as Cabin Crew. I enjoy various types of exercise and before I had my son I helped with Quenington Brownies. I'll be helping the Beavers and look forward to watching them grow and make the transition to Cubs!

Chloe: Cubs Leader
I've recently moved to Fairford from Milton Keynes. I'm an archaeologist and I enjoy walking and playing piano in my spare time. I've been in Scouts since I was 10 and I'm really looking forward to working with 1st Lechlade!

Jo: Beavers Leader
I'm new to Lechlade having lived in Faringdon and prior to that New Zealand. I've led children's groups for St John NZ and was an environmental educator. Now I work full time for Ordnance Survey. I've got two children who are enjoying Lechlade Scouts too.

Khalid: Cubs Leader
I'm a local dad of two and am really looking forward to working with the Cubs. I have a background working with kids, as Head of Youth Coaching at Fairford Rugby Club. I work full-time for Nationwide Building Society and enjoy running and cycling when I get a chance.

1st St. Briavel's Beavers (Forest of Dean District)

Here the need was focused on the Beaver colony which had closed during the Covid-19 pandemic. There were two brilliant assistant leaders in place, but they lacked the confidence to be able to lead the colony.

In stepped the Three Counties team and they worked with the team to initially begin with engaging with the young people and families so that they could therefore attract and recruit more adult volunteers so that when possible Face to Face meetings could re-commence.



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Again, advertising was key to the success of the recruitment and the materials available through the Scout Brand centre played a big part, supported by an active Facebook page.

By working with BBC Gloucestershire our Development Team Assistant was able to discuss volunteering opportunities with Anna King for the whole Gloucestershire area.



This, alongside advertising in many places including

- Hartpury college
- Ecclesiastical
- University of Gloucestershire and
- Some private businesses

One helpful highlight was that the two Assistant Beaver Scout Leaders enjoyed a fabulous evening with another Beaver Colony and their team, to realise that they are really very capable of running the section.

A family event was organised to build relationships in the whole Colony and has secured regular parent support to help the Colony grow and be sustainable.

All of this has led to the original assistant Beaver Scout Leaders growing in confidence, and the colony starting to thrive and grow.



Thanks

We are really grateful for all the work that the Three Counties Development Team do across the whole county. In the past year they have supported groups and sections across Cotswold, Cheltenham, Forest of Dean, Gloucester, North Cotswold and Stroud & Tetbury. Thanks too to the County Executive that have agreed to apportion funding to budget for this important support activity.

Recruiting and retaining volunteers

Regional Services Team

The Three Counties Development Project works alongside the Regional Service Team to help grow Scouting across the County. If you are interesting in find resources to recruit adults or young people, visit www.scouts.org.uk/growing-scouting where you will find lots of brilliant resources.



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On these pages you'll find resources to help you, including:

- Recruitment ready checklist – How ready is your group / District?
- A range of monthly workshops focused on recruiting
- How to make new joiners feel welcome
- How to get families engaged
- Mapping and exploring your local community
- How to attract more young people
- How to re-engage young people that have lost interest during the pandemic



SCORE CARD

So, this year has again, been a very mixed and a very difficult year, but where do we believe we are against our Score Card for our Vision for 2021?

Youth Involvement

District Youth Commissioners in all Districts	X
Young people on Execs and Appointments Panels	Good progress

People

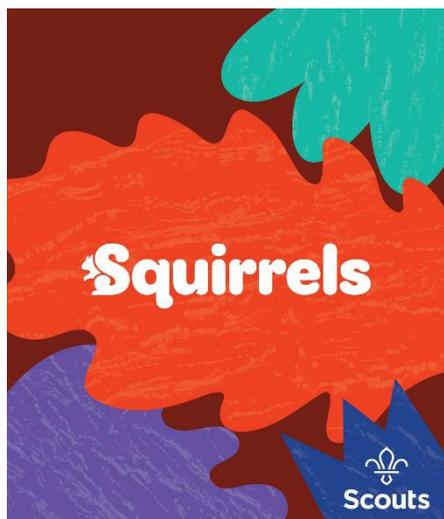
Vetting & Appointments complete in 5 months	Good progress
Getting started completed within 5 months	Good progress
Year on year increase in Wood Badges	✓
Adults recognised for their contribution to Scouting	Good progress
Recognition of our implementation of the Adult Training Scheme	Good progress
New: Adult mandatory training 95% complete	✓



Programme

More nights away	Work in progress
More international experiences	
More Top Awards	
Evidence of quality programme in every section (Quality Programme Conversations)	

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There are Squirrels in Gloucestershire!

Yes, you've probably read about them, but did you know we already have our first Squirrels Drey in Gloucestershire?

Thanks to our newly appointed ACC Squirrels **Nick Coates** and our Squirrels Advisor **Rishona Steward** and the amazing team at **1st Newent Scout Group** we were able to open one of the first new Squirrels Dreys for 4 & 5 year olds.

They had a fantastic first meeting with lots of fun and games, it was Nuts!!

If you are interested in finding out more or talking to someone about how you can have Squirrels in your Scout Group, please email squirrels@gscouts.org.uk

You'll also find lots of useful information on the [Scouts Webpages](#) and our own [GScouts Webpage](#).



Thank you for all of **your** support and hard work on our journey so far.

Mark & Team