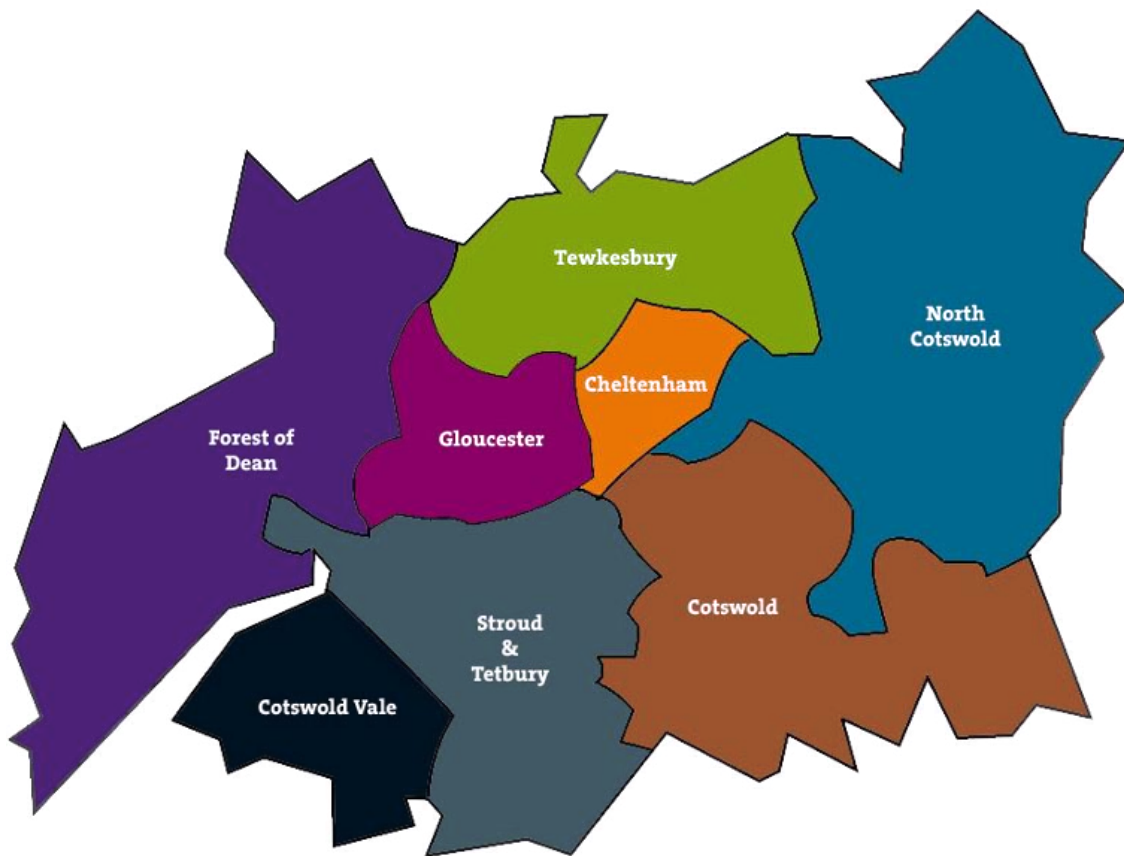


Gloucestershire Scouts

Annual Review 2024



County Lead Volunteer Highlights

As I ponder over the last year, I am amazed again at how much we as a County have achieved. This on top of the extra work that has been necessary for Lead Volunteers to ensure our compliance training, module training and permit schemes are all in date to safeguard our young people and adult volunteers.

I am immensely proud of this County and cannot thank you all enough for the many hours of preparation that you put in to ensure the young people left in your care on a weekly basis for a couple of hours have a wonderful time.

Over the year I have presented awards to young people and our amazing adults almost half termly.

There have been so many happy moments:

- Attending my first squirrel sleepover at 1st Prestbury was a joyous occasion. Joining the squirrels singing round the campfire was fantastic.
- Seeing the joy on the faces of those young people taking part in the Tewkesbury water weekend, participating in bell-boating, canoeing and kayaking.
- Meeting the new mini-gang at Gloucester Gang show and watching the incredible talent of our young people as they gave their all on stage. My thanks to the organisers of this show who give up so much of their time to ensure a brilliant show for all.
- Giving support to those walking the Cotswold Marathon and feeling honoured at being asked to present awards to finishing teams.
- Taking part in some amazing District events for St. Georges Day.
- Presenting Chief Scouts Awards – including the first Gold awards to Hardwicke Scouts for as long as anyone can remember. Our young people have all worked so hard to achieve their highest awards in their sections.
- Attending Beast and Network Ball – meeting Santa, but seeing our older sections having fun with friends in a more relaxed environment.
- Having the absolute honour to present lots of wood badges and adult awards and requesting even more awards for our amazing adults – see more about this later.





Being able to help at Strategy and Evolution this year, from the start of build week (cooking for the build team who give up so much to get the site ready) through to Evolution weekend. Seeing first-hand how much work it takes to get the site ready to receive nearly 3,000 young people and 500+ adult volunteers over two weekends. Not forgetting the reading of the bed-time story to the cubs during Evolution.

One of the honours that I have is being invited to represent Gloucestershire Scouting at different events and this year I was honoured to be invited to join with other organisations to meet and eat dinner with Justin Welby the Archbishop of Canterbury (otherwise known as ABC). A truly wonderful evening and it was so good to meet the lady who I sat next to at the awards evening in Hardwicke where her son was one of the two Chief Scout Gold Award recipients.

But the most magical times are meeting with the young people to hear all their amazing stories about their adventures, you their leaders and being able to remind them to thank you for all you do to make their scouting journey possible.

I cannot do all this alone, and I must take this opportunity to thank my senior lead team. A team that has changed this year. You are all brilliant. You have challenged me, guided me, supported me, encouraged me and most of all cared for me. So, a massive thank you to Liz, Kat, Chris, Josh, Hannah, Brooke, Louise, and Tony.

*Thank
You*

Carole O'Donnell
County Lead Volunteer



REMEMBERING THOSE WHO HAVE GONE HOME DURING THE LAST YEAR



Major Tom Wills – County Vice-President

Bill Ruther – Cotswold Vale

John Blackwell - Cheltenham

Rose Hughes – Gloucester

John Slater – Gloucester

John Morris – Gloucester

Barry Smith – Gloucester

Trevor Perkins – Gloucester

One year ago, I stepped into the role of County Youth Lead with big boots to fill, having taken over from Kat Holter. Very new to Scouting beyond my regular group evenings, everything was rather daunting to say the least. People often talk about imposter syndrome and I certainly felt some of that. Not only was I stepping into a Scouting role far beyond anything I had done before, I was also stepping into being an adult, a new job, a degree, and a fantastic group of people who all knew much more than me about You Shape and all had a few years on my age.

A year has passed and sadly, I am yet to catch up to those older than me. However, I'd like to say I have well and truly settled into all of the aforementioned endeavors. Across the County, we have grown from eight to eleven youth leads, and we have all been getting on with what we are here to do.

Having had a presence at Beast 23, a Gilwell Media Day, District fun days, Network and Explorer Ball, Cotswold Marathon, Farriers and Stomp, Gilwell Youth Training Days, Strategy and Evolution 24, GARGOYLE training days, governance and operational District and County meetings and countless smaller scale District, Group and Section events, we have been shaping Scouting to that of the Young People's vision wherever we end up, as well as (hopefully) making a positive impression.

I have loved everything I have done throughout the last year and am constantly reminded by seeing what Young People get out of Scouting why we do what we do.

We have big plans for the year ahead: we want to look at Top Awards and further Youth Engagement at the decision-making level. We are often left wondering where things will be by this time next year. But until then...

Joshua Netherton County Youth Lead



Volunteering Development

This last year has been a busy one for the Volunteering Development team (formerly the People and Development team) as we prepare for the changes of transformation. Since I took on this role last year, the structure of the team has been updated as part of the County Team restructuring for our move to teams-based volunteering. Within the Volunteering Development team, we now have six sub-teams

- Welcoming Sub-team
- Awards Sub-team
- Volunteer Growth Sub-team
- Learning Sub-team
- Inclusion Sub-team
- Safeguarding Sub-team

More information about each of the teams can be found on the County website.

Throughout the last year there have been many successes from each of the areas of our team. The training team, under the leadership of Mark, has been busy delivering as much training as they can, including over 20 first aid courses. It has been a great year for getting volunteers through their training and I would like to thank Mark and his team for their hard work. There is also more information on the team's work in Mark's report!

The Inclusion team has been busy attending County and District events, providing support for volunteers on how to be an inclusive movement. I had the pleasure of visiting the Chill Tent at Strategy and Evolution this year which has doubled in size since last year and included many new features such as an adult chill area and hammock chairs! As well as providing a space for people to 'Chill', they provided sanitary products, had an information board and could give advice to volunteers.

The team has lots of plans to support future events as well as the day-to-day running of Scouting. Thanks to Gary, Shell, Jessie, Donna and Lisa for their work this year!

In preparation for the transition from appointments panels to welcome conversations, the county appointments panel has been supporting conversations with District appointments chairs and secretaries to help them understand the changes. They have also continued to run county appointments panels for new volunteers within the county team. Many thanks to Tom, Pam, Neil, Kat and Keelan for their work with this.

Other highlights from the past year include 41 adult awards, an increase in section-based volunteers on our annual census from 2020 numbers and a significant decrease in volunteers waiting for an appointments panel within our Districts.

Some personal Scouting highlights for me have been supporting with interviewing for a new District Lead, attending the National Day of Celebration at Windsor Castle and the transformation launchpad day last November.

Looking forward to the next year, there are a lot of changes coming which my team and I are excited to support. My aims for the next year are:

- Support the implementation of new processes when the new digital platform is rolled out.
- Build my team to have a lead for each area and be delivering on projects.
- Increase the numbers of adult volunteer awards presented.

Finally, thanks again to all my team which has done an amazing job this last year and I look forward to another fantastic year of Scouting!

Kat Holter

Volunteering Development Team Lead



County Training report 2024

I'd like to start by saying a massive thank you. We have over 70 people across Gloucestershire who support learners with validation or the delivery and administration of their training. With all of you, all of the following would not be possible...

Wood Badges

In the past twelve months, 83 Wood Badges have been completed and recommended, which is a recognition to the levels of commitment and time put in by so many of our volunteers and the Training Advisors who have supported them with validation.



Our wonderful Training Advisors have supported our many learners to:

- Validate over **900 Core modules** (Modules 5 – 19* (excluding First Aid))
- Validate **132 Manager & Supporter skills**

On top of this, our small but dedicated band of County trainers have

- Delivered **24 training courses to 207 participants** and an Intro to YL Scheme for Adults
- Delivered **23 First Response training courses**

Our training courses are well valued and recognised as being high quality, not just in Gloucestershire but much further afield with regular attendees from all over the United Kingdom.

We get some great feedback about our courses and learners have said things like:

"[Trainer] was great, incredibly enthusiastic, asking all participants directly (really helps in the remote setup), and super knowledgeable."

"[Trainer] was great, very engaging involving everyone, and gave lots of real-life examples and practical suggestions"

"Really engaging and was easy to learn and pick up ideas."

When asked **"How likely are you to recommend this course to others"** we have scored an average of **3.9 out of 4** and 80% of attendees say that it has **increased their engagement** with Scouting (20% have said it remains the same).

Our courses continue to be well appreciated, effective and relevant to our participants. So, if you have training to complete, then don't delay, book onto one of our courses at www.gscouts.org.uk/training. Thank you to the small team of trainers who enable us to deliver the high-quality training that we do.

First Aid

We have delivered First Aid training to almost 200 volunteers across the County in a range of formats including a 6-hour course, a course with 2 x 3 hours and enabling members to continue to use the blended model where they can complete online learning, take part in an online workshop and then complete a practical assessment.

We have also worked in partnership with our Assistant County Commissioner to support a range of people to gain a 16hr outdoor First Aid certificate, enabling them to help keep Scouting safe in a range of activities.



Thanks once again to the team that has supported our members to achieve their First Aid training and make sure we keep Scouting safe. Each of these courses comes with the added responsibility of transporting and setting up a boot-full of equipment and materials.

Maintaining our high standards

As a wider Training team, every year we bring together all of our Training Advisors, our Trainers and our Training support team (Managers and administrators). We work together to review what we are doing, and look for better ways to continue

to support our members to learn the skills and knowledge needed to continue to support Young People develop skills for life.

Mandatory ongoing learning

Once again, you will all be aware of the high levels of focus on making sure we are compliant with our own rules, this is so that we do everything we can to make sure that we are protecting young people and each other in the most comprehensive way possible. At this stage, it's worth recognising the hundreds of you that have completed your Safety, Safeguarding, Module 1 – Essential Information, GDPR and Trustee Introduction in the past twelve months.

We are becoming a county with less and less people who have not completed their required training. In the past couple of years, the focus has rightly been on Safety and Safeguarding and as a result we find that less than 2% of our members are overdue.

We as a collective must continue this and do all we can to have a similar focus on GDPR, Trustee and Module 1 training. This helps newer volunteers keep us and our individual charities safe. Any support you can give with this to anyone else will be greatly valued.

What next?

Many of you will have heard that over the coming months and years, Scouting will be undertaking a transformation, aimed at making Scouting easier and more fun for our volunteers. As we make this transition, we will do all that we can to keep you informed as things start to happen.

Key things to look out for include:

For new volunteers

- A simplified approach to learning, with engaging online learning that when completed updates your records automatically.
- Wood Badges becoming optional for those that want to go beyond the basics of learning and learn new and useful skills.

For existing volunteers

- A refreshed range of interactive and engaging learning when you need to complete your mandatory training (e.g. Safety and Safeguarding).
- A new combined membership database and learning platform so that when you complete that all important learning, it will update your records. No sending certificates to people to update, no waiting for your record to be updated.
- Opportunities to learn new, relevant skills and knowledge that will help you in your Scouting role(s).

It's worth noting that there will be a higher level of learning required by ALL volunteers so that we can all work effectively together to keep Scouting safe for all.

For everyone

- You'll get visibility of your training record and access to learning like you have never had before to enable you to grow your knowledge and develop your skills where you want.
- If you are a volunteer manager, you'll be able to see the progress of the volunteers in your team without having to spend ages trawling the database.

We'll start to see things evolve later this year and all of the changes will take 12 to 18 months to embed. Keep working towards your Wood Badge and please do keep doing all you can to keep your Safety, Safeguarding and First Aid training up to date. It's one way to make sure we keep you and our Young People safe.

If you're interested in how we are transforming the volunteer experience, visit the [Transforming our volunteer experience](#) pages. You can find out lots more how we are creating a [more engaging learning experience here](#).

Mark Spiller

County Training Team Lead

Representing Gloucestershire at the Windsor Day of Celebration 2024

Every year new King and Queen's Scouts alongside higher adult award holders head to Windsor Castle for the Day of Celebration and Achievement. This year Gloucestershire was also represented within the Team of Ten. This team is formed of the six members of the colour party and four members of the service planning and delivery team. The team prepares and makes the day the full experience for award holders. I am immensely proud to have been a part of this team being able to deliver the National Scout Service within St George's Chapel. It has also been a special year with it being the 90th anniversary and the first time the event has been presented by King Scouts.

Selection took place in September 2023 at Gilwell followed by preparations in Windsor from December through to the event in April. During these months we curated a service based around reflecting on and considering the journey to be at Windsor in 2024. During this time, I've had the opportunity to think about my own journey to the team and what it means to be a Scout in Gloucestershire. As a county we deliver amazing programmes to our young people, and we can support them to be successful and make a difference in their local communities.

As we did on the day, I'd like to invite you to reflect on your Scouting journeys and celebrate your achievements both big and small. Consider who you might support next and what the next year holds for you. Windsor was my highlight of the year and I hope that everyone can find something to be excited about going forwards.

Thank you to everyone who had a contribution to my own journey to be a part of this team and a thank you to everyone who gives up their time to support other young people in achieving their own awards.

Ryan Hawkins

Windsor Team of Ten 2024



Progress Update on our County Vision

Aspire, Prepare and Achieve are the key words in our County Vision. Let's remember what we said about these before we look at outcomes currently against them.

Aspire

- To provide relevant and inclusive programme
- To be well led and youth shaped

Prepare

- Young people - skills for life
- Volunteers - to lead and support

Achieve

- The aspirations of young people and adults
- Through access to relevant, inclusive and engaging programme opportunities

So how have we done so far?

The key measurable outcomes we had in mind are below with how we think we have progressed.

ASPIRE

Increase on % of Young People Achieving top awards across all sections	✓
Review and update the County Structure. Our new structure is now available	✓
Increase on adults achieving wood badge	✓

PREPARE

Increase in adults volunteering their time.	We are still working on this
More young people (<25) in all decision-making teams.	We are working on this.
Youth Leads in all Districts	Only 2 out of 9 Districts without a Youth Lead.

ACHIEVE

Increase in number of nights away and permitted activities being offered to young people	✓ We have more permits covering a wider variety of activities.
Higher number of Young People achieving challenge awards and activity badges	✓
Inspiring Programme necker / badge relaunch	✓
Adult mandatory training at 97% complete	We are working to improve on this we are averaging at 94%
More International experiences	✓
Adults recognised for their contributions to Scouting.	✓

Whilst we still have some progress to make, we still have two years to achieve this and further changes to consider as transformation comes in. I hope that you are all as proud as I am of the progress that we have made. We can only achieve our vision because of **YOU** and the role(s) that **YOU** all do within Scouting to help improve the lives of our young people.

THANK YOU, on behalf of all our young people, for all **YOU** do.

Carole

County Lead Volunteer

Support and Growth Report

Three Counties Project – Led by Dave Hall



The Three Counties project closed at end Sept 2023 at the end of its planned three years. The work at Warden Hill was completed. Beavers and Cubs were established at 1st Fairford after successful taster sessions. There was little further work in Gloucestershire as the Local Growth Assistant (LGA) had left in June.

Somerset were unable to continue and Avon and Gloucestershire initiated the Two Counties Project on October 1st, 2023, following the success of the Three Counties Project. This project was initially funded with the underspend of Three Counties amounting to £40k. The two counties were able to provide additional funding for one year. They wished the project to run for three years in total but would need external matched funding to go beyond the first year, so a review was built in for April 2024.

Staffing has been a challenge throughout the latter part of the Three Counties and the subsequent Two Counties projects. Like other part time, antisocial hours jobs in hospitality etc it has been impossible to consistently fill all the Local Growth Assistant roles in both Counties. There was a brief period of success in early 2024 when a new Local Growth Assistant started in Gloucestershire, but they left after less than a month declining to give a reason, but it is thought that the antisocial hours, low salary and childcare demands were the main reasons.

Despite the lack of staffing, the project has been successful in supporting the growth in both Counties. The targets in Gloucestershire have been met by using the Local Growth Lead Officer's time for on the ground growth work. The additional value is the support from the Local Growth Lead Officer to local volunteers in linking them to other resources and avenues of support such as the Volunteer Recruitment Workshops and Peer to Peer support. The employment by The Scout Association of all staff has resulted in a well-trained and supported team, able to share ideas and garner support from the wider Growth & Communities Team.

Performance	Target	Achieved
Actual number of Local Growth Assistants	1	1 for 4 weeks
New sections	1	2
Existing sections reenergised	3	3
Sections in Extending reach communities (IMD 1-3)	0	0
Total Sections supported	4	5
Total spaces created/retained.	96	120

Both Counties feel that they would benefit from further local Development Support in the future and are currently considering their next steps, to be started once the national Transformation changes have been introduced.

The Steering Group want it noted that they are fully conversant with the fact that the success of the Two Counties Project was due in large part to the Local Growth Lead Officer, Coralie Thompson. Her dedication to the project, the volunteers and the team, along with her knowledge and experience enabled the project to be successful.

2nd Cirencester – Gloucestershire

The project request was to re-energise the entire Group as the Cub Leader was running all three sections. The Group has a great location next to a primary school but poor signage, there was little knowledge of the Group in the community and no GLV so risk assessments and programme recording were an issue. The team recruited a GLV and a total of 4 new adults for the leadership teams and increased the number of young people in all sections. Their support also energised the Group to improve signage, improve the look of the meeting place and use OSM effectively for recording programme and risk assessments.

1st Aylburton & Lydney – Gloucestershire

The project request was to reopen both the Squirrel drey and Beaver Colony that closed in 2023 due to lack of leaders. During the summer months this group usually meets at the Deer Park – which is also the District green field campsite. After some discussion it was agreed that for this summer to give the new volunteers chance to build their confidence, the new sections would meet at one of the local schools as they do in the winter. This meant that the new adults did not have to prepare bad weather programmes but it provided the opportunity to meet outside whenever they wanted to.

After following the usual process of assemblies, open event and taster sessions both section opened with Squirrels – 5 new volunteers and 14 young people and Beavers- 5 new volunteers and 14 young people.




Scouts Open Event

24TH MARCH | 2PM TILL 4PM | GL7 2NG

WE ARE LOOKING FOR GIRLS, BOYS AND VOLUNTEERS ACROSS ALL SECTIONS!



CUBS
(8-10½)
TUESDAYS
7:00PM - 8:30PM



SCOUTS
(10½-14)
WEDNESDAYS
7:00PM - 8:30PM



BEAVERS
(6-8)
TUESDAYS
5:45PM - 6:45PM

GET IN CONTACT BY EMAILING/TEXTING:
CORALIE.THOMPSON@SCOUTS.ORG.UK
07904 632790

2nd Cirencester (Stratton)

Transformation

Scouting is undergoing a period of transformation which will make some changes to how all volunteer together. This will be supported by some new digital tools.



Depending on your role, you may not be directly involved at this stage of the transformation but we encourage you to learn more about the changes that are on the way to support you in your volunteering roles.

- You can learn about [Our Volunteering Culture](#), and try some of the [activities](#).
- You can find out more about how we will [structure our new teams](#), including the use of [sub-teams](#).
- You can [find out what team you might fit into](#), and learn about the tasks teams will complete in the [Team Descriptions](#).
- You can explore the new [Learning](#) webpages and start to understand how we move from Training to Learning, including changes to the [Wood Badge](#).
- You can learn how we will [welcome new volunteers](#) into Scouts, and support them through [Inductions](#).
- If you're a trustee, find out how we will [transition from Executive Committees to Trustee Boards](#) and the changes to their purpose.

The digital tools to support this transformation are in various developments with volunteers from across the movement supporting the testing. These tools will support us with many tasks we currently do manually, as well as improve how we advertise our volunteering opportunities and learn new skills.

Transformation in Gloucestershire?

During the last year, the transformation team has been supporting the District Lead Volunteers and Group Lead volunteers to prepare their Districts and Groups for these changes.

We kicked off our transformation in November with the Gloucestershire Transformation Launchpad event, where we welcomed 57 people, made up of Group and District Lead volunteers and District and Group Chairs, to the Pavilion in Cheltenham for two half-day sessions that looked to provide:

- A better understanding of what is changing, why it is changing and how thousands of members in Scouting have been involved in shaping the changes.
- Knowledge that will help you and your teams in the coming months.
- The opportunity to plan for success for you and your team(s).
- The opportunity to meet others, just like you & get your questions answered.

This was followed up in June with the start of our Orbit sessions these were drop-in based sessions to support group lead volunteers and Group Chairs to understand any updates as well as what they can be doing now to prepare for how we improve our volunteering experience. These will be run during the rest of the year and will continue to provide updates to leaders across the county as we continue on our transformation journey.

We have also supported District teams by joining them at activities or events to give updates and run workshops focused on the role that Group Lead Volunteers and Chairs can play in supporting their groups.

In the second half of 2024, we will get ready for the digital tool to go live to support our transformation and we are pulling together a Go-Live support team to assist in the transition to our new digital tools as smoothly as possible.

If you have questions or want to learn more, start by visiting the websites above. If you want to know what you can be doing to get ready for transformation, then [check out this page](#).

If you still have questions or want us to support your Group or District then please email the transformation team at transformation@gscouts.org.uk

Chris Meadows - Support Team Lead

Young Leader Updates – GARGOYLE

The County Young Leader Support Team formed at the beginning of 2023. It needed a snappy name so GARGOYLE (Gloucester and the Rest of Gloucestershire Outstanding Young Leader Experience was chosen). We set up based around our philosophy that any young person across Gloucestershire who wishes to take part as a Young Leader should be able to take part in the YL Scheme.

We set out to rethink how the County could better support the Scheme and, following feedback from various Districts and Young Leader Teams, we have:

- Delivered two YL training days, covering 3 modules at a time: modules DEF (“Leopard” day) and modules JCB (“Digger” day), with GHI planned for Nov (bookings are open).
- Delivered two “Introduction to the YL Scheme for Adults”, another 2 planned in 2024.
- Set up Module K sessions for YLs, and Explorers as a routine offering.
- Stopped delivering the Module A at Cranham (we wanted a more mobile County module A). Revamped the County Face to Face module A to be a 2-hour focused session for YLs/DofE to be delivered in any district on request.
- Initiated an online module A for those YLs that can't attend a Module A in a reasonable timescale but need it.
- Delivered a County YL Conference for adults to explain what we are doing with County YLs. This will be an annual event.
- Set up a County YL OSM unit. This was in response to several questions posed at the County YL Conference, to which the answer from those attending was “wouldn't it be sensible to have a County YL record?”

We've also taken a strategic look at the YL Scheme. It can be completed in 15 months and then doesn't really provide much to engage YLs. Several of the GARGOYLE Team have attended Surrey County YL Training Days. They run a senior Explorer Scout YL scheme (SESYL – “Cecil”). This includes working towards a BTEC Diploma in Teamwork and Personal Development (TPD) in the Community. We have piloted this and have now awarded several TPD Diplomas to the first Young Leaders who joined the BTEC. The Diploma involves very little extra effort if a YL has completed the YL Scheme and an Expedition, such as DofE training. This TPD Diploma has generated sufficient interest that we're rolling it out annually in September to Explorers as well as YLs.

We're waiting to see what changes arise in the YL Scheme from Transformation, there's a revamp going on. Hopefully, the change will be more than just new badges. We've got ideas for a better Senior YL offering, but we'll see what TSA offers first.

One of our big changes has been the inclusion of young adult voices in GARGOYLE, including in delivering YL modules on the county YL training day. Including young adults has provided a fresh, new perspective on the Youth

Shape aspects of the scheme, particularly from those who found the YL Scheme absent in their District. It's also excellent to have learning delivered by young adults who are closer in age to the YLs. We really appreciate the energy and ideas that the Young Adults bring, it's invaluable, in the same way that sections need YLs to link between older adults and Young People in the section.

If you would like to know more about GARGOYLE, or the delivery of the YL Scheme, please email GARGOYLE@gloucestershire-scouts.org.uk.

Mark Westwood
County YL Team Leader



Gloucestershire Activities Team

It's been another exhilarating and busy year for the team facilitating fun sessions for our determined young people, skills training and permit assessments for our amazing adults and CPD for the extraordinary team of Assessors & Advisors. We are extremely grateful to all members of the team – it really isn't easy maintaining a robust logbook and the competence for the NGB qualifications they all hold. Plus, a big shout out to our awesome Bushcraft team who are always eager to share their camp craft wizardry!

As it stands, we have hundreds of permits held by 320 individual leaders covering Archery, Bell Boating, Canoeing, Caving, Climbing & Abseiling, Dinghy Sailing, Hill Walking, Kayaking, Narrow Boating, Nights Away, Off-Road Cycling, Power Boating, Rafting (Traditional), Snowsports and Stand Up Paddleboarding.

Where Permits are concerned, we can nearly always access a Permit holder or External Instructor for all of the Activities in the [A to Z](#), if you struggle please get in touch with us acc.activities@gloucestershire-scouts.org.uk.

What we really need to do though is strive to have a Nights Away Permit Holder in each and every Group (ideally within each Section within each Group) and Unit – details of how to run Nights Away and to achieve a permit can be found at: [Nights Away Permit Scheme](#). This will enable our Vision of allowing every Young Person irrespective of the Section they are in to experience at least one Night Away as part of the Quality Programme each year – we know that those lucky ones who do experience it really benefit as a result; developing skills for life, independence, teamwork and resilience. Remember, there are four types of Nights Away Permits – Indoor, Campsite, Greenfield and Lightweight Expedition (the latter is an automatic part of the Hill Walking Permit), so you can start with the basics and go for the Indoor Permit then setup a camp at your normal meeting place!

Lastly, please remember to check POR each time you run an Activity in case anything has changed – there have been

lots of changes lately: [Policy, Organisation and Rules | Scouts](#). One change about to hit us is the introduction of the Off-Road Cycling Environments and related Permits – see 9.12.4, which becomes live from the 31st August 2024. Watch this space, we should have our very own Off-Road Cycling Permit Assessor before that deadline all being well and this will be the second such Assessor in the whole of the South West Region.

Adam Griffiths
County Activities Lead



Gloucestershire Scout Climbing Team

We have had nearly 400 young people climb with us on our sessions this year, with many more having a go at Strategy where we helped run the mobile walls.

We ran two multi-week badge courses, and two weekends away to different parts of the Peak District. More locally, our sessions have been outside, as well as utilising a good range of local climbing walls.

We ran a training course for the nationally recognised Climbing Wall Instructor award, joining forces with two local counties, and so we now have some team members working towards their assessments. We also ran some permit training and have issued a good number of new permits this year.

The County Climbing Team aims to provide opportunities to climb both by running sessions for young people and running training sessions and assessments for leaders to help them gain their own permits. The County holds a full set of equipment which is available for use by permit holders in return for a small contribution towards the wear and tear.

We're always looking for more team members, so if you'd like to get involved then please contact us via email, climbing@gloucestershire-scouts.org.uk.

Thanks to everyone that's supported the sessions this year – we can't do it without you!

Andy Ross

County Climbing Advisor



Duke of Edinburgh's Award (DofE)

Scouting in Gloucestershire is full of amazing Young People, but you knew that. Among you are the proud holders of their new(ish) Duke of Edinburgh Award, having completed them in the past year. Congratulations to you all and **WELL DONE**.



Gold – **Benjamin, Joseph, Sam** (Cheltenham District), **Dylan, Idalia** (Tewkesbury District)



Silver – **David** (Cheltenham District), **Alana, Alex, Olivia** (Forest of Dean District), **Amy, Lucy, Martha, Tom, Nia** (Stroud & Tetbury District), **Zuzanna** (Tewkesbury District)



Bronze - **Josephine** (Cheltenham District), **Caitlin, Jeremy, Thomas, William** (Forest of Dean District), **Thomas, Yolanda** (North Cotswold District)

Around the County there are lots more of you busily working towards your DofE Awards, currently 41 for Bronze, 42 Silver and 59 of you working on your Gold. The variety and breadth of activities undertaken by Young People is amazing, giving their time to Volunteer with Oxfam, St John's Ambulance, Girlguiding, parkrun, after school Lego clubs and food banks, as well as the many of them that are Young Leaders within our younger sections! Running, walking, cycling, ballet and fitness classes have long been favourite activities for the physical section, but it's great to see people having a go with something a bit different like bare foot water skiing, dinghy sailing, street dancing, Tae Kwon Do or even dog agility.

It is great to see you getting out there on Expeditions again with a Stroud & Tetbury Silver expedition down the River Wye with additional support of adults from Tewkesbury and Cheltenham, a Forest of Dean District team completing their Silver expedition in the Black Mountains and a mixed County team coming together to explore the Forest of Dean for theirs supported by adults from Cheltenham, Forest of Dean, Gloucester and Tewkesbury, Well Done to you all.

It's great to see Scouting offering the DofE to Young People and how it has the simplicity of mapping the DofE Awards across to the Platinum, Diamond Chief and King's Scout Awards, enabling our Young People to achieve so much more.

Lastly, to all the volunteer adults who give so much to enable these Young People to have these opportunities to thrive and achieve these awards **THANK YOU**.

Andy Holter
County DofE Advisor

Badge Courses Report

There has been a variety of badge courses on offer this year for Scouts and Explorers.

Power Coxswain Badge

16 young people and 6 leaders took two narrowboats, Lancelot and Guinevere out for the weekend on the Grand Union canal. All young people took turns at steering the boat, working the locks and cooking the meals as well as learning basic boat maintenance and man overboard drills. Thanks to Lesley Herbert, Phil Hallett, Jean Buxton, Brendan Molony, Nige Wachs and Jamie Davies for running this weekend.



Climber Badge

12 young people had a great time climbing and abseiling on the walls at The Warehouse, Gloucester under the expert instruction of the Warehouse instructors.



Cranham Badge Weekend

Three courses ran over this weekend, the Electronics Badge, the Scientist Badge and the Forester Badge. Thanks to Dave Hall, Cath Coolican-Smith and Louise Slee for running these with the help of other leaders. The science badge participants did fabric dyeing using a variety of different techniques, some exercises to monitor their heart rates and covered aspects of fire safety as well as other science experiments. The electronics badge involved learning about circuit boards along with basic electronics and soldering. Over the weekend, the Scouts worked with small hand tools and soldering irons and made a "Steady Hand" game. Those working on the Forester badge worked outside for most of weekend. They clocked up 6 hours of voluntary service as well as doing Riverfly sampling where they observed and aided in a survey, along with counting the invertebrate species. Their results were uploaded onto a national base. They also worked with Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust on a conservation project with rare, white-clawed crayfish.

Survival Skills and Bushcraft Weekend

These courses were run at Miserden Park by Russ Burton, Dean Gore and Andy Sargeant with the help of other leaders. The Young People completed the Survival Skills Badge course requirements. As well as opportunities to learn or take part in how to use a life raft and survive at sea. They had First Aid training by a Paramedic. They discovered the ecology of wildlife management, learnt how to skin a deer, how to prepare and cook squirrels and fish for food. As well as having instruction in trap making. They learnt how to make water drinkable. They did wood carving, baking bread on rocks and how to eat raw nettles. They also became pyro experts with repeated fire lighting competitions!

Mechanics Badge

There were two courses of 12 participants run at Cheltenham District HQ. The Scouts were let loose on leaders' cars where they learnt about the basics of how a car engine works, topping up windscreen washers, how to change windscreen wipers and tyres. They all got the opportunity to remove a wheel and replace it. Thanks to Brendan Molony and David Cronk for running the courses.



We are looking to expand the range of courses available, if you are interested in running a course, we'd be happy to support you. We are always on the lookout for new leaders and ideas.

If you'd like to know a bit more email jean.buxton@gloucestershire-scouts.org.uk

Jean Buxton

County Badge Course Co-Ordinator

International

Visits Abroad 2024

As usual, a number of Visits Abroad are still underway as I write this report. This year's events are more varied than in 2023 – Gloucestershire has been represented at more camps but with less participants than in 2024.

AOTEAROA NEW ZEALAND SCOUT JAMBOREE – (December 2023 to January 2024)

Every three years New Zealand Scouts and Venturers, plus visitors from many other countries gather for their national Jamboree. Cheltenham leader Sarah Hick joined the International Service team this year.



ROVERWAY - Norway and Denmark

A patrol of eight Explorers and Network members have returned from Stavenger, at the main camp.

Thanks to Hannah Paveley and Freddie McCabe, who are both participants and the adult leaders of the patrol, for stepping forward to make this adventure possible for Gloucestershire. You will find more details on Roverway later in this report.



ZELHOFF INTERNATIONAL SCOUT CENTRE

32 Scouts and Explorers from 11th and 48th Gloucester, with Javelin Explorers visited this mini-jamboree in Austria. Whilst every group had its own programme, there were hundreds of other Scouts from around the world on the campsite for our young people to meet. Thanks to Chris Slater for organising this trip.



EXPLORER BELT EXPEDITION

This expedition for Explorer Scouts took place in Poland, after practice events in Derbyshire. Our team spent 10 days walking and camping in Poland, completing challenges that involved meeting the local people and exploring the culture. Opportunities for under 18s to complete the Explorer Belt require a lot of support and planning from the adults, so many thanks are due to Phil Horsfield for organising this jointly with Perthshire Scouting.



MARSNA JAMBORETTE

Twelve Scouts and Explorers from Mayhill and Huntley visited Meerssen in the Netherlands for this friendly Jamborette which has been running since 1984. Thanks to Paul Etheridge for keeping the group's link to this camp going for most of this time.



LOOKING AHEAD TO 2025 and beyond

Forest of Dean District are currently planning a visit to Belgium, and I hope this year's trips will inspire more groups to consider a Visit Abroad. There are always opportunities to take your own group abroad – you don't need to wait for a District or County event.

As a County, we would like to continue to take young people to some of the larger events, such as the Haarlem Jamborette, and to facilitate more Explorer Belt expeditions. If you are looking to be part of the leadership team for a bigger event, please keep an eye on the County website and make sure you are signed up to receive GScouts Spotlight as more information will be coming out in the next few months. We can only make these adventures happen for the young people if there are enough adult volunteers to support them. It can be hard work at times, but it's also a lot of fun, and the chance to really understand the impact Scouting has globally.

We can't take all the young people abroad every year, but there are plenty of International - based activities to put into your regular programmes. Check out Scouts.org.uk and the World Scout site <https://sdgs.scout.org/impact>. Let your members know that 57 million Scouts can make a big difference to our planet!

Do contact me if you'd like to know more about either taking your young people abroad or the Global Programme.

Chris Langham County International Lead

Strategy & Evolution 2024 – our 10th birthday!

June 2024 saw Strategy & Evolution celebrate its 10th birthday in style delivering the 8th on site edition of the events!

Over the two weekends the team welcomed more than 2,850 young people from Gloucestershire, surrounding counties and beyond, giving them the opportunity to take part in a wide range of activities during the Saturday main challenge events, the Sunday Fayre and the entertainment on throughout the weekend.

As always, the team is continuing to learn, listen to feedback and find the little iterative improvements to make the events even better. This year saw financial investment in a variety of behind-the-scenes areas such as the installation of a below ground water pipe to site to improve water pressure and provide resilience, purchase and testing of new digital radios to improve onsite communications, and a new RFID capable wrist band printer. The team also rolled out a new reporting system for near misses, minor incidents and dynamic risk assessments allowing anyone helping to record in real-time. Lots of the innovations and learnings at S&E are also shared with other county events and other large national events so that they benefit many young people and volunteers.

It's worth taking a moment to pause and reflect on some numbers from the last 10 years as well:

- Over 18,500 young people have taken part in 8 on site events, supported by 5,000 leaders and young leaders!
- Almost 1,300 families took part in 2020 S&E at Home – our virtual Covid Camp – taking part in 4,450 activities!

S&E couldn't happen without a lot of hard work from a lot of people during the weekends and throughout the year planning and preparing. We know that before delivering the events this year, we have had 513 individuals help at the events in the last 10 years. We think that's over 5,400 nights away for helpers alone!

On behalf of the S&E Leadership Team I would like to finish by saying a **BIG THANK YOU** to everyone who has helped, supported or attended the events; without all of you they simply wouldn't happen!

Here's to the next 10 years!

Lewis Dangerfield
Event Director



strategy
evolution

Cranham Scout Centre

It's been another busy year at Cranham Scout Centre with a focus on infrastructure and building firm foundations for the future. We've used the Bannister fund to install solar panels, a battery and improved the energy efficiency of the centre by converting lights to LED. It's already having a big impact and we're looking forwards as to how we can make more changes to reduce our energy usage across the site. We've also almost completed the new shelters which will provide improved facilities to our campers on the main site.

We recently ran two skills days that invited young people from across the county to come together and tired their hand at skills from Bushcraft and Backwoods Cooking to Archery and Rifle Shooting, they even took part in an environmental conservation project.

As always, we are extremely grateful to our regular volunteers, for all the work they do. We have had more regular volunteer helpers, as well as several corporate teams on site this year. However, there's always plenty to do and the kettle can always be on! No matter how much or little time you can give we'd love you to help. Just get in touch and we'll find out what works for you!



Roverway 2024

From the 22nd July to the 5th August, 8 members of Gloucestershire Scouting, attended Roverway, an international jamboree which this year was hosted in Norway. Roverway is a unique camp for 16 to 22 year olds across Europe and incorporates both a Path and a Main camp.

For the first part of our Roverway journey, we were on a path at Campsite Kvernmoen, which was located near Halden on the outskirts of Oslo. This was a camp with 250 of us from all across Europe and we also had a patrol from Australia.



We were split into troops, and as Troop D we called ourselves Dum og deilig after a well-known Norwegian song. During our path we did pioneering, canoeing, campsite maintenance and our own path international evening. We also got to go on a morning hike to the Swedish border and completed a monopoly run in Halden. After 5 days on path, it was then time to head to the main camp.

To arrive at main camp, we went on a long 9-hour coach ride to Stavanger which included a short ferry where we tried Svele - a Norwegian pancake filled with buttercream. Once we arrived at the main site, we headed over to the opening ceremony where there was live music, a flag procession and a campfire. We then set up our camp, ready to enjoy main site and everyone coming together from different paths.

During the main camp we took part in a variety of activities including networking, water sports, sustainability and outdoor challenge. We experienced an international day which began with an international showcase and each contingent tent hosting traditional activities. We got to try fairy bread from Australia, try fish paste from Sweden, learn about the evil eye in Greece all whilst collecting stamps in our 'passports' to earn a new badge. We also got to visit Stavanger where as a patrol we explored different museums about maritime, printing and canning. Some of the patrol also visited a local Norwegian Scout Group and toured around their Scout hall and learnt about Norwegian Scouting. After 5 days on site, Roverway shortly came to an end so it was soon time for the post event for the UK contingent.

The first part of our post event was a visit to Sola Beach where we got to play some beach games and go paddling in the sea. We then headed on an overnight ferry to arrive in Denmark to explore Copenhagen. In Copenhagen, we went on a canal tour, saw the little mermaid statue as well as visited different museums, botanical gardens and even the zoo. It was a lovely way to end our Roverway journey before we headed home.



The next Roverway will be held in 2028 and I look forward to the future Gloucestershire patrol bringing back their own unique experiences.

"For me, one of the best parts of Roverway was to be able to meet and work alongside people from other countries. I also enjoyed being able to trade badges, neckers and t-shirts with these people in order to bring something physical home from the event". – Alexander

"Roverway has been one of the best experiences of my life and I have made so many new friends. One of my many great memories was the monopoly run in Halden. We got to know people from other groups while having a walk and enjoying some incredible views." - Freddie

"I had an amazing time! I found it really interesting to learn about so many different cultures and what experience people had had that made them who they were today. I thought it was an incredible opportunity that really opened my eyes to the world around me as well as being able to help me connect to the person I am and the person I want to be. That's not to say that there weren't some things that I didn't enjoy or didn't find hard, but I think the experience that I have had, even more so the difficult ones in some way, will help me to overcome different challenges and obstacles that may appear in my life and what I can very happily do, is owe some of this to Roverway 2024 for helping me figure myself out just a little bit more." - Sophie



Good and Outstanding Service Awards

Once again, we have continued to ensure that our adults are recognised by applying for HQ awards. I am pleased to announce that the following awards have been granted in the latest submissions from HQ.



Bar to the Award for Merit

Joy Turner - Gloucester
Gary Bluett – Forest of Dean
Lauren Greening – Gloucester



Award for Merit

Geoff Hall – Cheltenham
Harry Butland – Cheltenham
Jill Hetherington - Cheltenham
John Cummins - Cheltenham
Steve Reis – Cheltenham
David Roberts – Forest of Dean
Jennifer King – Forest of Dean
Fiona Morrissey – Forest of Dean



Chief Scouts Commendation for Good Service

Brendan Molony – Cheltenham
Callum Johnston – Cheltenham
Oli Robins – North Cotswold
Kerry Sutton North Cotswold
John Foster – North Cotswold
Melanie Keighley – Forest of Dean



Commissioners Commendation Award Awarded by the County Commissioner

Hannah Paveley – Deputy County Youth Lead
Nick Hawke – North Cotswold.

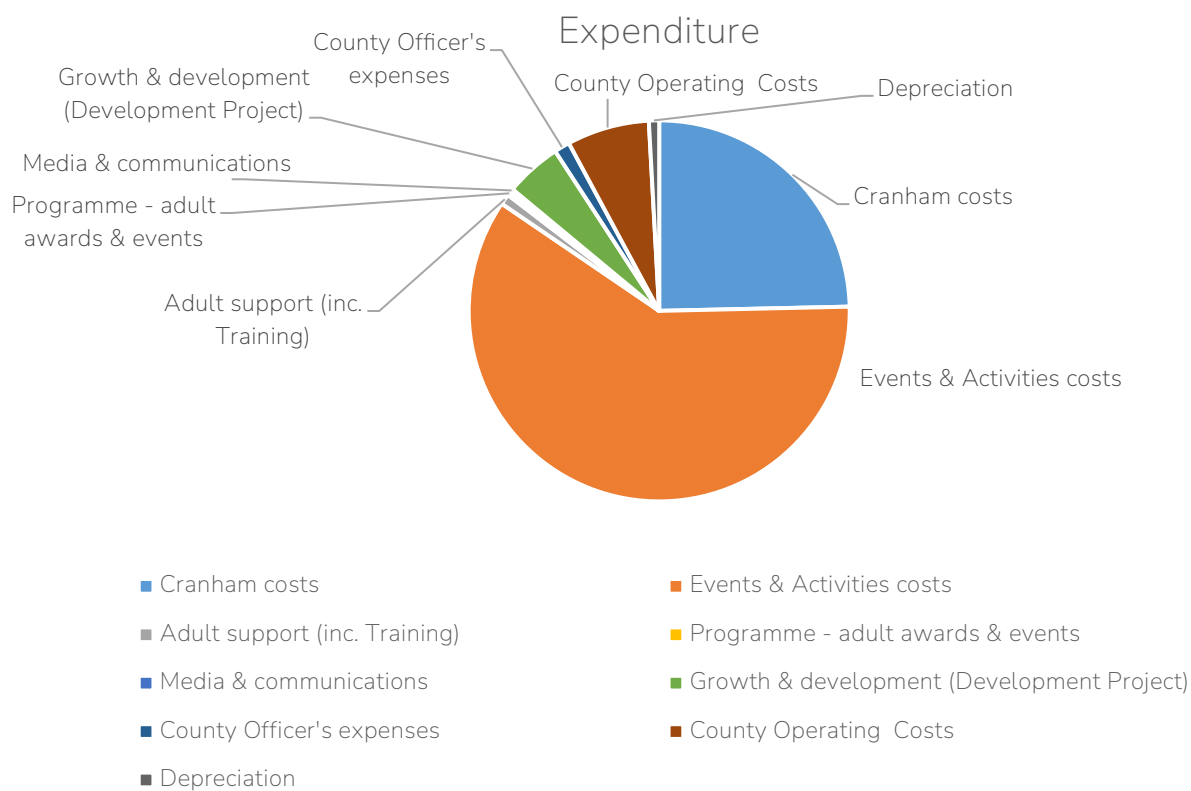
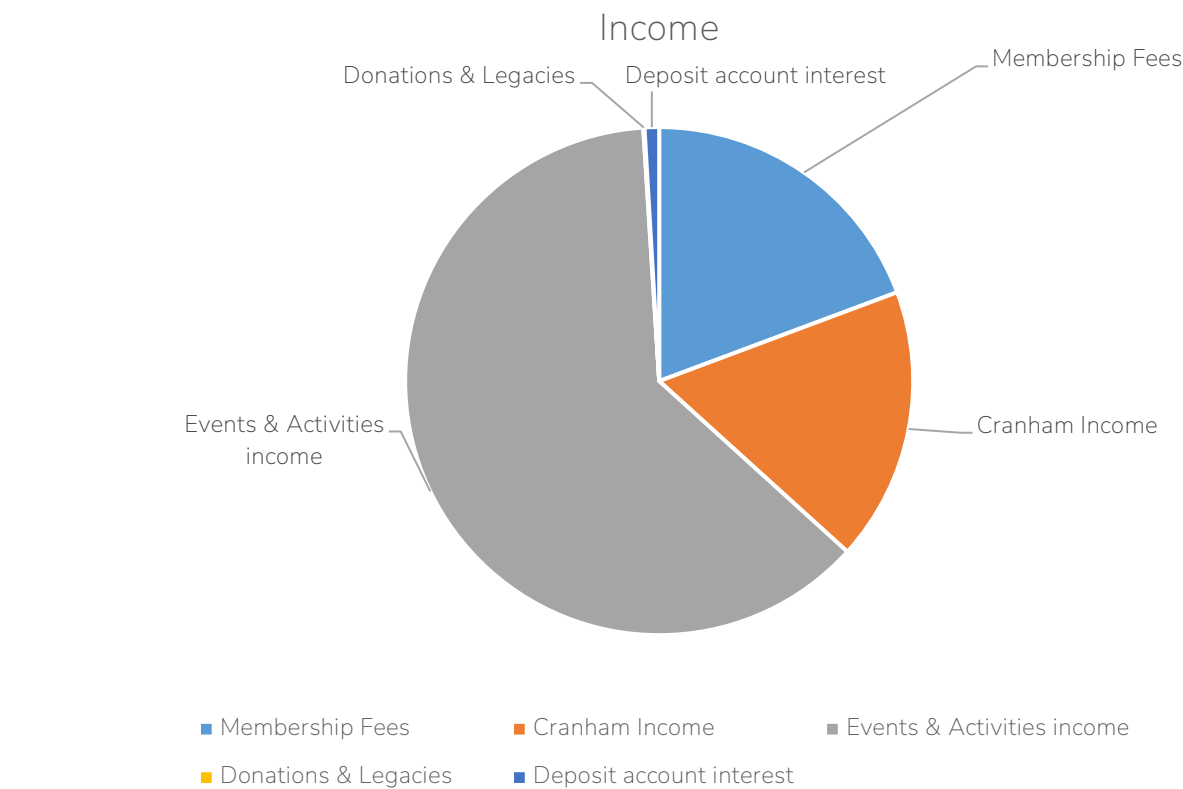
Chief Scout's Personal Award

Alana Haroun – Forest of Dean



Finance Summary

We know that our statutory annual accounts can be hard to understand, so please find a summary of our income and expenditure for the past financial year below.



Round the Districts

Every year our Districts are invited to share with you all that has been happening locally.

Cheltenham

We have seen our first ever King's Scout Awardee in Callum Johnstone.

Our District Quarter Master, Jamie Davies got to meet our New Patron!

Youth centered events have as ever been run, enjoyed and with so much more yet to come. Here's a flavour of a few from the past year:

There was as ever a good turnout in brilliant sunshine for the 2023 Cheltenham Town Remembrance Parade.

Squirrels have had a good year firmly establishing out three dreys. The Squirrels have learned many a new skill and also had some exciting adventures. Given the many full sections and long waiting lists, with Squirrels reporting 2-year waits, we could do so much more if we continue to make strides into recruiting more adult leaders. But enough from the grown-ups, here's what several of the Squirrels think:

- "Camping is the best part and I'm really looking forward to more. Having biscuits with stories and roasting marshmallows in campfire are my favourites"
- "I really love crafting at Squirrels, especially when we use things we've collected from outside and paints from those big wooden boxes"
- "My favourite thing has been camping at Squirrels. I have also really enjoyed going to the fire station, cooking the marshmallows, painting the fairy doors, and coming to the scout hut every week being excited and happy that I'm going to have so much fun with everyone"
- "Squirrels has made me braver and more confident, I love the camping"
- "I love camping outside and the camp at the scout hut, the Teddy bears picnic was fun"

Beavers have as ever learned new skills and got out on many an outdoor activity.

Highlights from the Cubs include fundraising and foodbank shopping at Morrisons, annual night hikes with sleepovers, Pack Holidays to Cranham Scout Centre to cover Chef and Scientist badges & many a Summer Camp.

As ever, Scouts have flourished and one group even had a three-week media session interviewing and learning about the lives of some high-profile people.





The Explorers from Devil's Chimney once again 'did good' at this year's Cotswold Marathon gaining Fastest Junior Team in Gold and Fastest Team on the Silver Route collecting the Keith Aston Trophy and some younger Scouts from 41st Cheltenham were the Male Trophy winner for the Bronze Route.

PiPs Llamas ESU reports that they were able to support Wotton under Edge Scouts; entering the postal first stage of the competition just for the experience they found themselves in the Shoulder-to-Shoulder final of a National Schools Competition held in Cannock. To further their skills and experience Neil Hatton coached them at Wycliffe College and they attended both a PiPs evening and had a private visit to Prestbury just before the Final.

Shooting sessions were regularly held at Enigma ESU and Black Sheep ESU. All the range equipment was transported to Leckhampton on one occasion to allow all the 30 scouts to shoot as part of their normal weekly programme. During the next year they hope to expand their offering to include 3 position shooting.



New Specialist Explorer Unit Born

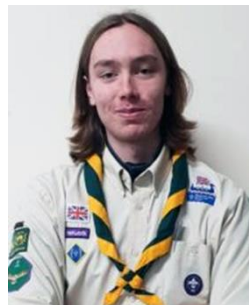
Following on from last year's creation of Enigma ESU which has now celebrated its first anniversary as a full Explorer Scout Unit, this year saw the start of a third specialist Explorer Scout Unit which will concentrate on delivering Top Awards. Amongst other events here we see them enjoying an expedition to Dartmoor.

So, here's to thanking One and All for all your hard work and for a bright future as we look to 2025 and beyond.

We were also most pleased to know that Mikey Jaynes BEM was recognised by King Charles III with a British Empire Medal: for services to young people and to the Cheltenham community - 1st Hatherley Scouts, Cheltenham and also prior to that with several other Youth Groups across Cheltenham.



A new District Youth Lead



January 2024 saw the appointment of our first ever District Youth Lead, David Cronk, this being the new title for the former role of District Youth Commissioner.

He has made an exceptionally good start and has been seen presenting awards including at the 41st Cheltenham Scout Council (AGM) and elsewhere.

He was also a key player at the St. George's Renewal of Promises and Fun Day and is making good preparations for a public facing event showcasing all things Scouting at Sandford Park planned for 8th September. I am sure he would appreciate a broad input of help with that from all of the Groups and Explorer Units!



Godfrey Tarling District Lead Volunteer

Gloucestershire Scouts Annual Review 2024

Cotswold

At the start of the year Cotswold District was still in the doldrums after Covid. During that time like most in Scouting each group had become a cell, with little or no contact with the rest of the district or county.

Much of the everyday administration had been neglected causing a backlog of leader training, and many with mandatory training and DBS clearance going out of date. This backlog and the steady influx of new leaders to be processed became the priority of the autumn. By Easter, the District was fully compliant for mandatory training and remains so today.



Regular visits to the groups to get to know the leaders and their problems allowed me to start the process of reforming inter group relationships. With the improvement in the weather, the camping season restarted and saw leaders from groups supporting each other with specialist skills or just helping out. I made it a point to attend all the local camps partly to assess the skills of the leaders but just as importantly to once again get under canvas myself. During my visits to these camps, I was delighted to find that the leaders were doing an excellent job indicated by happy scouts of all ages engaging in a variety of activities and sleeping well at night. The district was well represented at both Strategy and Evolution at Cirencester Park.

Unfortunately, the Beaver and Cub groups based in Lechlade will cease to meet at the end of July 2024. This is due to two of the leaders resigning due to family and work commitments. It is hoped that the remaining leader and some of the youngsters will relocate to Fairford. The remainder will go to groups in other counties. This disappointment is offset by the long waiting lists at Fairford and South Cerney, forcing discussions about opening extra sections at both locations. The limiting factor is the continuing shortage of leaders throughout the district and County.

Heather Mitchell of Deer Park Kemble and Ruth Garner of Fairford have both decided to step back from their longstanding lead roles but are continuing to support in a less hands-on capacity. David Freeman having moved from Scotland has taken over the GSL/GLV role at 1st Cirencester. The district's small but developing Explorer unit has close ties with the group and meets on Friday evenings under the leadership of Lee Reeves. Phil Cottey of 2nd Cirencester (Stratton) after holding the group together single handed with the aid of parents and Occasional Helpers, has formally taken on the role of GSL/GLV. The group is now supported by an experienced Scout section leader and an active Trustee team.



There is a backlog of awards yet to be presented at the next District AGM but four sets of Wood Beads have been presented to Dan Sweet GSL, Louise Thomas, Mark Thomas from South Cerney, and a second set to Ruth Garner at Fairford for her Role as GSL.



The County Commissioner presented, the much deserved 'Inspiring Programme' Necker to Claes 'Mike' Svensson, Scout Leader at South Cerney at Strategy.



Last, but in no way least I would like to recognise Ron Shell, our District Administrator, for his continuing help and support of the training and administration of the district. Without his efforts the district would not have been able to develop as it has over the last year. Similarly, I thank all those, not in uniform roles, who have also worked in the background to keep the District running.

Neil Hatton
District Lead Volunteer

Cotswold Vale

The past year has been a real year of change with the stepping down of Mike Stennett as District Commissioner, then the temporary appointment of Mark Spiller as acting DC, whilst we looked to recruit the next District Lead Volunteer that will oversee the growth and success of a small, but great district.

To support the district, we have made some key appointments and welcome Alistair Smith to the role of District Youth Lead and John Tunncliffe to the role of DESC. Both have already started being really influential in their roles and have been busy supporting Explorers and groups deliver brilliant Scouting.

We have now recruited our next District Lead Volunteer and welcome Deborah Whitfield to the role. Deborah has a wealth of experience and talents, all of which she has previously been using as Group Lead Volunteer at Dursley Scout Group. You may also have seen her around as she is one of our brilliant First Aid Trainers.



We look forward to supporting Deborah and watching the District continue to thrive, especially as we transition to our new volunteer experience.

We grew!!

Our Census in January 2024 as shown that we have continued to grow as a District with the number of young people aged 4-18 enjoying Scouting across the District increasing by 6%, something we should all be incredibly proud of.

Four out of our seven Scout Groups that have grown and we also have:

- More females in Scouting than ever before (29% of our Youth membership)
- More Network members than we have ever reported.

Every age group has increased which is testament to the Inspiring programmes being run by the many amazing adults in our groups and sections.

- | | |
|-------------------|------------------------|
| • Squirrels (+4%) | • Scouts (+4%), |
| • Beavers (+8%) | • Explorers (+30%) and |
| • Cubs (+1%) | • Network (+466%) |

Growing further

We have been working with the Growth and Communities team who have supported us significantly in two key areas.

With an already full Meyer ESU, John our District Explorer Scout Commissioner developed a strategy to grow our leadership team so that we can start to welcome and develop even more 14–18-year-olds.

In partnership with the Growth & Communities team, we have been running taster sessions for young people and look forward to opening a new Explorer Scout Unit in September.

We also are excited to start to see progress on the development of an Explorer Scout Young Leader Unit, where Young Leaders from across the District can be trained, enjoy additional programme opportunities and be amongst a community of like-minded young people.

District events and activities

In April 2024, we came together to celebrate and renew our Scout promises at our St. George's Day event. This event headed up by Seb Braun (Group Lead Volunteer at Wotton Under Edge Scout Group) saw over 100 young people come together to do activities, play games, be entertained and renew their Scout promises. This event was also the perfect opportunity to present awards to Adults: Ali Smith (District Youth Lead) and Chris Meadows (Deputy County Commissioner) took the time to recognise so many of our volunteers and present Good Service and length of service awards.

It was a fantastic event and we'd like to thank the team which organised it and the trustees for their support.

Mark Spiller ex-Acting District Lead Volunteer



Forest of Dean

Now in my second full year in the role and I'm happy to say the district is continuing to grow. We had seen the loss of a squirrel drey, but I can report that this is back up and running at previous success levels. Started 1 New Squirrel Drey that is growing and have plans for two more over the next year. Our annual census shows 703 under 18 Members with continued growth across the age ranges.

The District Network has had the best increase this year with 40 members, an increase of 22 from last year.

Diversity & Inclusion

Inclusion is a challenge that all sections are approaching with interest. There is a clear need to update relevant training for all around all areas as there are an increasing number of young people joining the sections who are challenging the role of leaders to adapt and learn.

Youth Shaped Scouting

Overall, the District has embraced the youth shaped scouting and has been working on the award sections. The Youth commissioners have been supporting the groups to achieve their goals and are working on a Youth Ambassador programme to support the voice of our young people. Some of the activities they had attended are:

- District Lead Volunteer group and section visits
- Youth Ambassador Introduction Day.
- Group Lead Volunteer conference.

The District Beaver Colonies are in good health with all groups having at least 1 and a few having two colonies. The section has shown growth this year and is continuing to attract new members. The Section has delivered

- Cooking and healthy lifestyles programmes
- Sleepovers in public libraries
- Visits to places of interest in the community

Our ADC Cubs has been instrumental in many events and activities for the Cub Section bringing the groups together to support outdoor scouting. A few of the activities that have gone on in the last year: -

- Overnight Camps
- Cub Activity Day
- Evolution

District Scout sections have embraced the need to return to outdoor scouting. Almost all groups have summer camps planned. This year we have successfully appointed a new lead for the section, and we welcome Sam McDonagh to the role. Sam has been with the district for many years and has experience with local scouting as well as a number of years as a Leader on the Falkland Islands. Some of their activities include:

- Practice camps for the Summer Belgium Expedition Camp 2025
- Cotswold Marathon
- Strategy
- Sailing and Water Activity Camps

District Explorer Scouts' numbers remain steady, but all units are actively scouting outdoors. All units are involved with Strategy, and many other events. This year, the section made the decision to attend Strategy as a District allowing more explorers to access the event. Our Young Leaders programme is delivering face-to-face training with requests from other districts to attend some Modules showing the quality of their delivery by the team. We are starting to push DofE across the District at present, this for the expedition part but looking at developing this to support all areas. Some of their events this year have been:

- DofE Expeditions
- Beast
- Strategy
- Get together and recruitment event hosted by Obsidian
- Cotswold Marathon

In addition, this year we have been able to Award 3 Commendation Awards to Explorers for their exceptional dedication and selflessness to scouting: Alex Townsend, Scott Townsend and Olivia Cotterall.

We are also proud of Alana Haroun who was awarded the Chief Scouts Personal Award for her own actions, dedication to scouting and continuing selflessness while support others in scouting.

While showing the most dramatic growth in the district, Network has not been as active this year as we would have hoped. This is mainly due to many being at university this year. However, the team has plans to increase this over the summer months with new programme and ideas for September.

Mark Stapleton
District Lead Volunteer



North Cotswold

This has been a challenging year. We are extremely grateful to Ricky Campbell for stepping into the breach as we continue our search for a District Lead Volunteer. Ricky has been amazing, but unfortunately is now stepping back from being the Deputy Lead Volunteer to concentrate on Bourton on the Water group. A massive **thank you** to Ricky.

Census this year saw a total growth of 5% across the district.



We opened a 2nd Squirrel Drey in the District at Bourton-on-the-Water and it was fantastic to see the two Squirrel Dreys lead the St George's Day flag bearers into the church for the District St George's Day celebrations and renewal of promises.

Learning in the District has been going well with Getting Started badges being awarded and also wood badges. Well done to all those who have received these.

Finally, thanks to all our amazing leaders who enabled our young people to achieve their top awards during the year:

Squirrels – Chief Scouts Acorn Award – 11

Beavers – Chief Scouts Bronze Award – 8

Cubs – Chief Scouts Silver Award - 12

Carole O'Donnell
Acting District Lead Volunteer

Gloucester

Gloucester District's year got off to a busy start as always with Gang Show closely followed by St. George's Day.



Our Gang Show staged an incredible production with one of the largest District Gangs ever, made up of 84 cast members, 64 of whom were aged under 25, and 56 non-cast members in supporting roles. The show provides a unique creative opportunity where Scouting and Girlguiding can come together.

Our annual St. George's Day Celebrations followed its traditional format with a parade through the streets of Gloucester leading to the Cathedral and it was great to be led once again by the Gloster Gladiators Marching Band. The Cathedral was filled to capacity for a service which included a performance by the Gang Show cast, the story of St. George and the opportunity to renew our Promises. This year's event was planned and delivered by our ADC (Programme Support) Team with help from our District Cub Leader Team and many other volunteers.



The Cub Leader Team was in action again just a week or so later hosting the Chief Scout's Silver Award ceremony at the Civic Suite in the North Warehouse. 21 Cubs and their proud parents were welcomed by the Town Crier and the Awards were presented by the City's Mayor.

Throughout the year the team organised many other events for the Cub Section including a Fun Day, Scientist Badge course, a Quiz and more.

District events for other Sections were also provided by the ADC Team and other leaders which included a Beaver Fun Day, Scout Challenge Day and a Beaver Christmas Party. All sections enjoyed the District's JOTI/JOTA event in October and the Archery Club met monthly throughout the year.

The 51st Cotswold Marathon event involved nearly 500 participants in our annual night hike supported by incredible volunteers.

The District Trustee Board has been busy keeping things in order. The rebuilding costs of our District Headquarters has been re-assessed and our other assets reviewed to ensure that we are adequately insured; an MPLC Licence has been purchased providing cover for Groups to watch live and recorded media; our Risk Register has been updated and the District Support Fund has continued to support young people to access Scouting. Murray Hall has benefitted from on-going maintenance and a new roof.

During the year we have opened a new Squirrel Drey at 11th Gloucester (Hucclecote), a new Cub Pack at 58th Gloucester (Hubb) and re-opened the Scout Troop at 31st Gloucester (Highnam).

The number of young people benefitting from Scouting in Gloucester has risen, with the 2024 Census showing a seven percent increase over 2023.



Dave Hawkins

District Lead Volunteer

Stroud and Tetbury

It's been nearly a year since I was appointed DC for Stroud and Tetbury, **Wow**.

So much has happened since then.

I have appointed a District Youth Commissioner, Rhys Herschell-Burns to further support our YP and Youth growth and we have grown as a District with two new sections, Trinity ESU and Randwick Squirrels. We had a 4% growth overall and now need more Leaders to support even more.

The DLV role is a very diverse role and not just "getting out there" as I am finding out. I have been able to visit all the Groups in the District which means most of the sections. Lots of admin has been completed behind the scenes. District Beaver and Explorer Leaders' meetings have been held, which have been informative and will continue across the district to support sections and promote best practice as well as joint events. We are now looking to do the same for Cubs and Scouts.

I have visited sections in their venues, so made fires, cooked, took part in circus activities and at the many camps or activities throughout the district and glad to say that activities are happening and with lots more planned.

Strategy and Evolution was well supported with Leaders including myself in supporting roles. Many sections attended and did particularly well with Minchinhampton and Randwick gaining top awards at Evolution.

We have had sections at the Essex International Jamboree and Rhys at Roverway as part of the IST.

I have more aims to achieve in the short term and long term so I'm looking for support in many different areas. This will make us smarter and more effective as a District and in turn, as Groups. We are considering an annual District event as well as more international events and getting input from Stroud & Tetbury, both Young People and Leaders. We need a new Trustee Board which will work on two levels, Admin & Governance and the Operational & Events, so a range of Trustees please, I have contacted local organisations for help but any home-grown and Youth would be great.

My own training and courses are going well. I attended Gilwell Park in March for the face-to-face commissioner induction which covered lots of areas. Then in September, I will do the Skills of Management course at Cranham. I have been on many online sessions. We now have some HQ support to help re-open the Stonehouse Group and I visited the Air Ambulance to view the new badge which is going to be great.

Nights away training is taking place with a 3-person team ending with a supported camp, this team will also check the NAN forms first for me to approve once accreditation comes in with transformation. In the meantime, they advise me on Nights Away as I continue to learn more.

Paul Bentley

District Lead Volunteer, Stroud & Tetbury



Tewkesbury

September saw a successful AGM as a new era in scouting started with roles changing names but the function staying the same. I also attended some of the group AGMs.

The end of the month saw another successful water and activity weekend with young people and leaders from across the district and county. We also had a group with SUPs visit us with county coach Stewart Tedaldi and water assessors Paul R & Roger G. They were there to take part and to advise leaders on permits and renewals. Every year we learn how to tweak the organisation and improve.

Many thanks to the Bushcraft team, Dean G, Russ B, Rob N, Andy S and other leaders who assisted on these days and ran the Bushcraft. Also, Nic C who developed and set up the booking and payment system.

Remembrance Sunday had a very good turn out around the district. I attended the one in Winchcombe. Good to see pictures from across the district of the young people of all ages and leaders paying their respects.

As always, I get more invites to camps and meetings than I can possibly cope with but try to attend as many as possible. Beast camp for explorers was popular.

It is good to see the diversity of what is on offer to our young people with activities outside of the meeting place. Several groups attended Pantomimes, had Christmas parties and trips to restaurants to celebrate the season.

2024 census: youth numbers have increased year on year since the pandemic but adult leader numbers are slow to return.

This year saw many entries to the Cotswold Marathon at all levels. This was good to see as many years ago I managed to complete the 38-mile route three times

Young people also attended Shire Jam, Bald Eagle and individual colony, pack and troop camps.

In March, I attended a two-day Crossbow Training Course to run a range. This was in the Forest of Dean; many thanks to FOD for organizing. We are planning St George's Day celebration for 2025 to be in Tewkesbury Abbey. Hopefully a parade, planning is in place.

I have chased compliance training and done DBSs. The HQ new system makes chasing compliance a lot less time consuming.

Strategy and Evolution had good turn out from Tewkesbury District. Good to see Explorers from all 3 units attending as one group. Big thank you to Lynsey and Derek.

Thanks to the efforts of the team at Winchcombe which has recruited a team to run Cubs and we have some volunteers willing to start a Squirrel drey. Nic Coates is assisting with this with Chris Brewster. We still need to recruit a Group Scout Leader.

Leader training for Bell Boat helm was run and we now have three new helms who were assessed by Andy Train at Fladbury and who now have permits. Tewkesbury Floods stopped us using it earlier in the year and eventually we were able to take Winchcombe Scouts out on two occasions. Bredon Scouts have also been out with their leader Nic Jones who has also got a permit.

We are looking forward our District AGM will be at Holy Trinity Church Hall on 25th September.

The Water and Activity Days will be Saturday and Sunday 28th and 29th September.

Chris Lodwig

District Lead Volunteer



Final Words

WOW – what can I say. When we look back over the past 12 months and see just how much we have achieved, it is absolutely astounding.

None of this would have been possible without **YOU**. It is about teamwork. Whether at County, District or Group level we work as teams – it may not always seem that way, but as teams we are stronger and achieve more.

I cannot express enough how proud I am of everyone who supports and volunteers in Gloucestershire Scouting.

Without your input our young people would not be experiencing the many varied and challenging ways to gain skills for life. I have seen our young people grow and mature to move on to become leaders of today.

We have new challenges ahead, but remember you are not alone, we are in this together and we will support each other.

So, a massive **THANK YOU** not only from me but from all our young people for the amount of hard work and hours that you give to them and your fellow team members.

Carole

