

Gloucestershire Scouts Annual Review 2026



County Lead Volunteer Highlights

Last year was a period of growth, resilience and renewed energy across our county. With a committed team of volunteers and ever enthusiastic young people, you all delivered a programme that balanced adventure, skills development and community service. Despite the ongoing pressures of families, schools and volunteer time, our county has continued to thrive and offer opportunities that genuinely make a difference and this is completely down to **YOU**.

What have we achieved as a county?

- Delivery of a full calendar of outdoor activities, including hikes, bushcraft and navigational challenges.
- Held the 53rd Cotswold Marathon. Testing both our young people and adults over three routes (bronze, silver and gold) in teamwork, endurance and orienteering – all in the pitch black of the night.
- Increased the number of camps held to enable so many young people to achieve their first nights away.
- Focused on practical skills such as first aid, cooking, map reading, and problem-solving.
- Encouraged leadership development through peer-led activities and opportunities for older members to support younger ones.
- Supported local initiatives including food bank collections, litter picks and community events.
- Strengthened partnerships with local organisations, helping young people understand their role in the wider community.
- Participated in remembrance activities and local celebrations, representing Scouting with pride.
- Maintained a strong membership, with steady attendance and positive engagement across all groups and districts.
- Celebrated numerous badge achievements amongst our young people but also recognised a great many of our wonderful volunteers with awards.
- Maintained a strong safeguarding and safety culture, with volunteers completing required training and updates.

Group Visits

For me the most inspiring part of visiting Scout groups is seeing how welcoming you all are. Programmes are being shaped to include everyone - neurodiverse young people, those with additional needs and those who may not have had access to outdoor experiences before. Leaders are adapting activities, offering flexible roles and making sure every young person and adult feels valued.



When I spend time with our young people, I see the future in action. All your programmes aren't just fun activities - they're shaping confident, capable, compassionate young people. I walk away knowing that Scouting is still doing what it has always done best: giving young people the tools to thrive.

Looking Ahead

The coming year will focus on:

- Further expanding our programme of outdoor activities and nights away.
- Continuing to recruit and support volunteers to strengthen our leadership team.
- Preparing for major events such as the **Haarlem Jamborette 2027** and **WSJ Poland 2027**, ensuring young people have opportunities to take part in international Scouting.
- Enhancing our facilities, equipment and resources at Cranham to allow all to discover adventure in a safe and welcoming outdoor centre.
- Producing in collaboration with all our volunteers and young people, our new County strategy that will link directly to the new Scout Association strategy – Place to Belong.

I cannot lead the county alone and I must take this opportunity to thank my senior lead team.

- Mark Spiller (Volunteer Development & Support Lead)
- Rhys Herschell-Burns (County Youth Lead)
- Hannah Paveley (Deputy County Youth Lead)
- Chris Meadows (Programme Support Lead)
- Liz Hodge (Project Support).
- Also, the County Trustee Board, led by our Chair Dan Seamarks
- and of course, Louise Little our County Administrator who keeps us in check and has a great listening ear

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 you all.

Carole O'Donnell – County Lead Volunteer



Remembering Those Who Have Gone Home During The Last Year



Kay Reeves – Cheltenham

Mikey Jaynes - Cheltenham

Brian Wingfield – Forest of Dean

Beryl Heart – Forest of Dean

Ruth Turner - Gloucester

Cranham Scout Centre

It's been another busy and exciting year at Cranham. The results of our recent consultation showed an overwhelming support for the site, with members making it clear that Cranham is a facility they value and want to see continue to grow and improve. In response, £50,000 is being invested in refurbishing and enhancing the site.

The Management Board has been reformed and is now focused on delivering these improvements while developing a clear long-term vision for the future of the centre. We're also delighted that Brandon, our Operations Manager, has now been appointed on a permanent basis, providing continuity as we move forward.



Under the direction of the Trustees, the site continues to be transformed. Recent improvements include additional parking in the Grove and at the top of the site, along with the installation of a Cavebus, which has already proved to be extremely popular with visiting groups. Regular volunteer work parties, supported by corporate volunteer teams, have enabled us to tackle a number of larger projects across the site. We are also incredibly grateful to our dedicated volunteers – Dave, Herb, Chris, Sheila, Louise S and Mark – whose ongoing commitment keeps the centre running smoothly day to day.

This year has also seen the introduction of a new online booking system, allowing users to check availability and make bookings with ease. The feedback has been very positive and the system will also help us understand better how our facilities and activities are used, enabling us to plan and invest more effectively in the future.

By the time you read this, we will also have launched our new brand: **Cranham Outdoors**. Our refreshed logo retains the familiar beech leaves while providing a stronger, more modern identity, particularly for digital use. While our name and branding have evolved, our purpose remains the same: **to provide a safe, welcoming and sustainable centre where everyone can discover adventure, develop skills for life and strengthen community through high-quality outdoor learning and experiences**. We remain proudly owned and operated by, and for, Gloucestershire Scouts.

If you haven't visited Cranham for a while, we'd love to welcome you back. Come and see the changes for yourself – we look forward to seeing you soon!

Colin Steward - Cranham Management Board



Volunteering Development

Another year of awards, growth, inclusion, learning and welcoming.

It has been another successful year for our team, marked by growth and positive change. As Volunteering Development Team Lead, Kat Holter has helped get the team up and running brilliantly as part of our transformed approach to Scouting. Thanks, Kat for your work and for handing over such a well-placed team.

Just before Kat handed over to me, Ryan and Brooke joined the team as our County Awards team which meant we nearly had a full scoped team:

- Growth support: Dave Hall and Tom Harding
- Inclusion: Jessie Wheeler and Shell Vaughan
- Awards: Ryan Hawkins and Brooke Martin
- Adult Learning: Mark Spiller, who leads two teams which you can find out about further down this report.

When I started leading this fantastic team, one of the first things we agreed upon was aiming to develop a purpose for the team. We have defined that we want to:

Support the entire volunteer journey, including the recruitment, welcoming, training, reviewing, supporting, recognition of, and exiting of volunteers in the County Team and to offer support in these areas to District Volunteering Development Teams.

As a team we have met frequently to brainstorm challenges, share practice and updates and support one another. I'm lucky to be leading such a motivated and committed team. The following report represents just some of our activity:

Adult Awards and recognition

This year, volunteers across Gloucestershire Scouts have received **58** Good Service Awards and **117** Length of Service Awards, recognising contributions ranging from Commendations for Good Service to the Silver Wolf and celebrating service from 5 years through to an incredible 60 years.

To further strengthen recognition across the County, a new Awards Team has been established to support the promotion and delivery of both national and local awards. Over the past year, we have successfully coordinated nominations for all eligible County appointees for Commendations for Good Service and Awards for Merit, helping to ensure that those who go above and beyond receive the recognition they deserve.

We have also provided additional support for nominations for higher-level Good Service Awards, particularly the Bar to the Silver Acorn and Silver Wolf.

Looking ahead, our focus is to:

- Increase awareness of the Good Service Awards scheme and Gloucestershire's local recognition awards.
- Provide greater support to Districts in identifying and nominating deserving volunteers.
- Ensure that the outstanding contribution of our volunteers is recognised and celebrated at both local and County level.

If you receive an email from the Awards Team, please do get involved. With everyone's support, we can make sure that volunteers across Gloucestershire Scouts are recognised in a meaningful and impactful way. Find out more about awards and local recognition at: gscouts.org.uk/adult-awards

Ryan and Brooke

Growth

Before we start with our report, we think it's useful to share the following context that helps guide us in our work:

- **Growth is not something that can be done directly but is a result of coordinated actions**
- **Growth in Scouting is a result of delivering great programmes to as many young people as possible and there are lots of Groups across the County doing this now**
- **To enable further growth, Scouting needs more volunteers and increasingly more places to meet as well as sharing best practice**
- **Additional volunteers and support are also required to support our amazing front line volunteers without adding to their workload**

Given the limited time and resources the County has, it is crucial that we focus on a small number of key areas with quantifiable and achievable targets. Funding and resources from Scout HQ are very limited and unlikely to increase in the near future. It may be possible for the county to receive grant funding.

It is widely agreed that recruiting young people is not a priority, after all there are very significant numbers on waiting list across the country and county. What we need are more volunteers to support the delivery of high-quality programmes to young people. In some Groups there are small sections which cannot deliver Scouting at its best. To support this the county team has agreed three priorities:

1. Recruit and Retain Trustees

Trustees are very important to any charity. In Scouting, they work with the local Lead Volunteer to ensure that suitable governance is in place and are responsible for Health and Safety as well as financial performance. There is a lot on the Scouts website to support the recruitment, welcoming and training of Trustees. In some districts the Boards of Trustees are doing well, in others they are struggling. We have focussed on supporting DLVs to facilitate:

- Parents and guardians – **letters for parents shared with DLVs**
- Social media including LinkedIn – **being trialled now**
- Go-volunteer-Glos, GlosJobs and similar sites – **increasing and improved use**
- County and national Scouts vacancy boards – **used for a local contact point**

Other avenues being explored and templates made available:

- Approaching local businesses, focusing on corporate values, CSR and staff training & retention
- Holding open events possibly at a district, group, business or social setting (Probus, etc)
- Approaching people whose children have left home, gone to university elsewhere

Alongside this promotion and recruitment, it is essential that we have established welcoming and support processes to retain those we have and the new volunteers. Trustees may be parents, friends, people who were Scouts as well as those who are new to scouting.

2. Recruit District Lead Volunteers to support and develop Scouting across the county

If a Group needs support, where does it come from?

Each Group needs a GLV, either an individual or a small team. The roles of the GLV and rest of the District are vital in supporting new coal-face volunteers:

- Support and training of Adult Volunteers
- Co-ordination of sections to maximise the effectiveness of Young Leaders
- Promote the provision of Explorer YL training
- Consider succession planning and leadership teams rather than individuals
- Focus on Groups first where a GLV /team often also works with at least one section

We have supported the recruitment of 2 DLVs in the past year and are still active in Gloucester without much success so far. It is clear that volunteers are usually doing multiple roles – and enjoying them and so do not want to change.

A lot of promotional work has been completed including: -

- Adverts in local community magazines and Gangshow programmes
- Local job vacancy websites
- Leaflets circulated via GLVs, posters in meeting places and local noticeboards
- GLVs, District leaders and trustees to meet in August to celebrate successes and start to plan for the future

Ideally, in the future we would be forming a core of a Search Team early to focus on succession planning and early identification to ease transition. Maybe we should look outside current Scouting – which presents additional challenges!!

For good groups to become great they need to be part of a well-led District!

3. Support Small Sections

Sections may have few members for many reasons but some need support to recruit more adult volunteers to provide exciting programmes for young people. This will need the involvement of the GLV/DLV.

In rural areas the sections can join together, provided that leader/YP ratios are maintained – the programme becomes more challenging to ensure that activities are engaging and appropriate. Some interaction across the District would be needed. Inter-District activity may be beneficial, particularly when Groups are located near a District boundary.

Recent Census results are being used to identify areas where support might be required along with any discussions that have taken place. This will help us to focus on areas where local Scouting is supportive of the proposal. Districts/Groups may need support with this, and local volunteers need to be identified.

So far little progress has been made with this area as we are focusing on the other two but if you need help please contact us.

Dave Hall and Tom Harding - Growth team

Adult learning

Branching out

We've been continuing to make sure adults across the County can continue to access additional learning whether that's to learn new skills or work towards completing their Wood Badge.

It's been a pleasure to deliver these courses to members of our County and across the UK:

- Skills of leadership (8)
- Working with Adults (9)
- Growing the section (13)
- Intro to Residential (16)
- Practical skills (18)
- International (19)
- Assessing Learning (25)



These courses continue to get great feedback

- Trainers are rated 4.8 out of 5.0
- People rated the workshop as helpful for the participant's success (4.8/5.0)
- Participants are likely to recommend these courses to others (3.8/4.0)

First aid

Once again, our First Aid Training team has delivered an amazing range of opportunities to help keep Scouting safe. The team has delivered **26 in-person First Response training courses**, in **14 different venues**, to **over 290 volunteers** across the County in a range of formats including a 6-hour course, a course with 2 x 3hours and a 3hr zoom session 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 locally.

We've also been able to support the delivery of several Module K courses for our Young Leaders.



We are so thankful to the dedicated bunch of trainers who have delivered First Response in the past 12 months; Deborah, Carol, Rish, Naomi, Ruthie, Clare and Mark. This year has been really exciting as we have now onboarded a new trainer (Mackenzie), have one more in progress and are looking at two more trainers. It's a growing team of amazing people

We have also worked in partnership with our County Activities Team lead to support a range of people to gain a 16-hour outdoor First Aid certificate, enabling them to help keep Scouting safe in a range of adventurous activities as well as help us deliver First Response Training to more volunteers.

Thanks go to Liz Orchard, who not only delivers this course brilliantly but also adapts it to meet the specific needs of Scouts. Her ability to tailor the content to Scouting is second to none. Thanks Liz!

We'll be offering some more 16-hour Outdoor First Courses in the autumn, so keep an eye on the County Training Calendar if you're interested.

Thanks once again for 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.

Inclusion

Our new Inclusion Lead has been continuing to work with our previous lead, Shell, to ensure that support is readily available across the County for any inclusion-related questions or challenges.

We know that inclusion is an important and often complex area and many volunteers do a fantastic job of finding solutions and adapting support locally. However, if you do need advice or guidance, the Inclusion Team is here to help. Simply get in touch at inclusion@gscouts.org.uk and they will be happy to support you in any way they can.

This year the team has dealt with lots of local enquiries as well as helping our DLV Leads better recognise and support inclusion needs locally. The team is also once again (rightly) proud of its continued support at County events, including Strategy, Evolution, Discover and BEAST, where they have helped ensure that young people and adults can access support and a safe space using one of the chill zones.

Mark Spiller - Volunteering Development Lead



Programme

Young Leader Updates – GARGOYLE

The GARGOYLE Team (*Gloucester and the Rest of Gloucestershire Outstanding Young Leader Experience*) exists to ensure that every young person who wants to complete the Young Leaders' Scheme has the opportunity to do so. While many Young Leaders complete the scheme within their own Districts, GARGOYLE provides an alternative route for those who are unable to access the training and support they need locally.

GARGOYLE is a mixed team of adults, some of whom have been involved with YLs for many years, others who have been YLs more recently and bring a fresh Network-age perspective.

It's been a busy year and, although we haven't achieved quite as much as we had ambitions for, we have continued to support the YL Scheme in the County, including:

- Continuing to deliver the YL Scheme for anyone in Gloucestershire with YL training days at weekends. We cover 3 modules at a time: modules DEF ("Leopard" day), modules JCB ("Digger" day), and GHI ("Gee"). The Youth Leads have run one session at each County YL day and it is always entertaining. The attendance at these is regularly in the 20s. We've tried new venues, thanks to Charlton Kings and Hatherley for hosting us.
- Consolidating our delivery of Module K sessions for YLs (Emergency Aid Level 4/5) as a routine offering 3 times each year. These are invariably oversubscribed.
- Finalising the County face-to-face module A as a 2-hour focused session delivered in pictures. It's available for delivery to YLs/DofE in any district on request.
- Offering the online module A which, while not our preferred option, has proved valuable for those YLs that can't attend a face-to-face Module A in a reasonable timescale.
- Using the County YL OSM unit as the admin tool for booking and communicating with any YL/DofE attendee on any County run YL modules, including the BTEC.
- Offering the Teamwork and Personal Development in the Community BTEC Diploma to Explorers and YLs. Achieving the Diploma involves very little extra effort for a YL who has completed the YL Scheme and an Expedition, such as DofE. Enrolment is open for the September sign up and introductory day.

It hasn't been entirely successful though:

- We didn't hold the County YL Conference for adults this year: the start of 2026 was congested.
- We've looked at travel across the County and had hoped to run a YL weekend camp to cover half the scheme, with various other activities. There was support from the YLs, but other Scouting commitments meant that we didn't get time to organise it. We will run a Saturday 3-module session and a Module K on the Sunday instead.

From further afield, the national review of the Explorer Scout Programme didn't affect the YL Scheme, but we know that it is being looked at (and has been for a while).

If you would like to join us in rethinking the YL scheme for Gloucestershire, or just want to know more about GARGOYLE, or would like any modules of the YL Scheme to be delivered locally to you, please email GARGOYLE@gloucestershire-scouts.org.uk.

Mark Westwood -County YL Team Leader

Adventure

Firstly, I would like to extend my sincere thanks to all of our instructors, permit holders, assessors, activity teams and volunteers who have given their time, energy, and expertise throughout the year. The opportunities outlined in this report simply would not be possible without the dedication of those who plan, organise, deliver and support adventurous activities across Gloucestershire. Your commitment continues to provide young people with challenging, memorable and safe experiences that embody the very best of Scouting.

This year has seen significant investment in both people and facilities across the County. We have seen the continued growth of leader Continuing Professional Development (CPD) opportunities through climbing, archery and shooting, enabling permit holders and instructors to further develop their knowledge, skills and confidence. Alongside this, substantial improvements to facilities at Cranham, including developments to the rifle range and associated infrastructure, demonstrate our commitment to providing safe, high-quality environments in which young people can learn and thrive. These developments, together with growing partnerships with external organisations and clubs, are helping to strengthen activity provision across Gloucestershire for years to come.

As activity provision continues to expand, it is important that safety remains at the forefront of everything we do. A key area of focus for all leaders and permit holders is ensuring that the level of first aid provision is appropriate for the activity being delivered. Leaders should carefully consider the environment, remoteness and nature of the activity when determining what first aid cover is required. Whilst First Response remains an essential qualification for many leaders, activities undertaken in more remote or adventurous settings may require Outdoor First Aid qualifications or equivalent competence. Ensuring the right level of first aid support is available is a fundamental part of responsible activity planning.

Equally important is the need for robust preparation. Risk Assessments, Emergency Plans and Contingency Plans should be viewed as practical tools that help us deliver safe and enjoyable activities, rather than simply administrative requirements. Effective planning allows us to identify hazards, prepare for foreseeable incidents, respond appropriately when things do not go according to plan and ensure that activities can continue safely despite changing circumstances such as adverse weather, equipment failure, staffing shortages or access restrictions.

In addition to our activity permit teams, Gloucestershire is fortunate to have a strong team of 17 Nights Away Assessors. This gives us the capacity to ensure that every leader who wishes to gain a Nights Away Permit can access the support, training and assessment they need. The Nights Away Permit Scheme is unique within Scouts, as it is the one permit that cannot simply be outsourced and therefore relies entirely on our local team of experienced volunteers to support leaders through the process.

Nights away experiences remain one of the most important elements of the Scout programme. They create opportunities for adventure, independence, resilience, teamwork and personal growth that are difficult to replicate through weekly meetings alone. For many young people, camps, expeditions and residential experiences become their defining memories of Scouting. Every young person in Gloucestershire should have regular opportunities to participate in nights away activities as part of a balanced, adventurous and high-quality programme.

We therefore encourage leaders who are considering taking young people away to come forward and challenge us to help make it happen. Whether you are looking to gain your first permit, extend an existing permit or simply build your confidence in planning and delivering residential experiences, our Nights Away Assessors are here to support you. Our ambition is simple: no young person in

Gloucestershire should miss out on nights away opportunities because a leader cannot access the training, mentoring or assessment they need.

More broadly, Gloucestershire is exceptionally fortunate to be able to assess the vast majority of permits in-house. Across the County we have 4 Climbing Assessors, 5 Hillwalking Assessors, 4 Paddlesport Assessors, 3 Archery Assessors, 1 Off-Road Cycling Assessor, 1 Narrow Boating Assessor and 1 Caving Assessor. The presence of an Off-Road Cycling Assessor is particularly noteworthy, as this remains a comparatively rare specialism nationally. Collectively, this gives Gloucestershire one of the strongest assessor teams in the UK and allows us to assess and develop leaders locally across a wide range of adventurous activities. This greatly reduces barriers for volunteers seeking permits and helps ensure that we continue to grow the number of leaders delivering adventurous activities safely and confidently throughout the County.

Scouts has also continued to refine and improve Policy, Organisation and Rules (POR) over the last year. Key changes have included updates to governance requirements relating to trustee appointments and decision-making, together with a substantial reorganisation of POR to make policies, volunteering culture, local organisation and activities easier to find and navigate. Leaders are encouraged to familiarise themselves with the latest edition of POR and ensure that local practices and activities remain aligned with current requirements.

The reports that follow demonstrate the breadth and quality of adventurous activities being delivered across the County. From climbing on the gritstone edges of the Peak District, to developing new shooting and archery opportunities at Cranham, to expanding paddlesport provision and instructor development, our volunteers continue to create exceptional experiences for young people. Thank you to everyone who has contributed to another successful year of adventure, challenge, learning and growth within Gloucestershire Scouting.

Adam Griffiths - County Adventure Team Lead / Manager of the Activity Permit Scheme (MAPS)

Climbing

The year kicked off with the Leaders monthly CPD starting in August. This was for any leaders to either learn or to improve their climbing skills. However, in November and December we opened this up to young people who were already experienced climbers.

September saw us take 12 young people with varying experience for a weekend climbing in the Peak District, climbing at Stanage Edge on the Saturday and Burbage North on the Sunday.

The first climbing badge course of the academic year was run in October at the Cheltenham Ladies' College Sports Centre. Over a four-week period, 12 young people completed all the elements required to be awarded the Climbing Activity Badge, including learning how to abseil.



November was an exciting month for us as we were kindly permitted to start running sessions at the brand-new, state-of-the-art climbing centre in Gloucester, 270 Climbing. The first session was run in November, followed by others in January, February, March and April. This included sessions for Cub sections on the fun Clip 'n Climb walls.

November also saw us run a day's training at 270 Climbing for aspiring permit holders.

The second badge course was held over four weeks in January and February, this time for 15 young people. This course is now extremely popular, with places normally being filled within a day or so of announcement.

January was a particularly rewarding month for the instructors as two of us assisted and observed on a Mountain Training Climbing Wall Instructor course being attended by four of our Explorers. A number of these young people had attended sessions with their Groups, badge courses and previous Peak District climbing camps from an early age. Following the course, they now enter a period of consolidation and supervised instruction before undertaking assessment to become qualified climbing instructors themselves.

With the better weather, May saw us head outside onto real rock. Over the weekend of 9 and 10 May we ran two outdoor sessions. The first, at Wyndcliff Quarry, was for three Explorers who were already experienced climbers and who learned how to lead climb outdoors. The second day saw our return to Symonds Yat, where a group of 12 less experienced Scouts and Explorers consolidated what they had learned indoors. In addition to climbing, they completed an abseil, with a number enjoying it so much they returned to repeat it.

June saw us run two outdoor sessions at Plump Hill, near Mitcheldean, for over 20 Scouts.

Looking ahead, we are running a weekend climbing camp in the Peak District in October and another badge course in October and November.

Andy Ross – County Climbing Team

Shooting

Master at Arms Courses – During the winter season Tim Simpson and I ran two Master at Arms courses, primarily for Cheltenham District Scouts. The second course was massively oversubscribed, demonstrating the increasing demand for shooting opportunities across the County. Both courses were run at Hatherley Scout HQ.

- September 2025 – Six-week Master at Arms course, 9 students.
- January 2026 – Six-week Master at Arms course, 14 students.

NSRA YPS Instructor Course and Improvements to Cranham Shooting Facilities – Over the weekend of 11–12 April 2026, 11 leaders took part in an NSRA Youth Proficiency Scheme Instructors Course at Cranham. The course was delivered by Mrs Chrissy Monksummers, a member of the National Coaching Squad. Whilst most attendees were from Gloucestershire, one participant travelled from Wiltshire due to the shortage of similar courses in that area. With onsite accommodation available for both tutors and students, this event has the potential to become an annual fixture.

The course was also the first event to utilise the Spring 2026 redevelopment of the Cranham rifle range and associated facilities. Improvements included extending the range to 10 metres, improvements to target stands and the ballistic curtain, the purchase of four new higher-standard air rifles and the installation of a Home Office-approved security cabinet.

Further improvements planned during the summer include:

- Upgrading the perimeter fencing.
- Installation of a mid-range baffle.

- Modifications to the range building to further reduce ricochet risk and improve visibility.

Future proposals include:

- An instructor development programme based at Cranham, similar to that established within the Archery Team.
- A meeting of Air Rifle Instructors to explore how shooting can continue to develop within the County.
- Introduction of an NSRA Youth Proficiency Scheme qualification course for older Scouts and Explorers, subject to demand.



South Gloucestershire and the Forest of Dean are currently the only other districts actively delivering shooting, so as a County Team we are keen to support the growth of shooting opportunities across all Gloucestershire districts as part of delivering quality programmes.

Neil Hatton – County Shooting Team

Archery

During the year, a new Leaders-Only Archery Development Programme was launched at Cranham for leaders holding a valid Archery Permit. The initiative was modelled on similar development opportunities offered by the County Climbing Team and aimed to provide permit holders with regular opportunities to practise, develop their own shooting skills and gain valuable Continuing Professional Development (CPD) to support permit renewals.

The first session, held at Cranham and hosted by Brandon, was extremely successful and well received by those attending. The evening provided an opportunity for permit holders to improve their shooting, exchange ideas and best practice and discuss ways of raising the standard of archery across the County. Feedback from participants was overwhelmingly positive and demonstrated a clear appetite for further development opportunities.

As a result of the success of the initial session, it was agreed that regular leaders' development sessions should continue, with future topics and activities being shaped by the needs and interests of those attending. The programme has already created a valuable forum for sharing knowledge, strengthening the network of permit holders and promoting consistency in archery delivery across the County.

One of the most significant outcomes of the programme has been the development of a relationship with Deerpark Archers in Shurdington, one of the South West's premier archery clubs. This partnership has opened opportunities for leaders to access higher-quality equipment, shoot at longer distances and experience additional disciplines such as field archery and clout shooting.

Building on this relationship, Cranham hosted members of Deerpark Archers for an Axe Throwing and Air Rifles session. This reciprocal arrangement strengthened links between the organisations and resulted in several of Deerpark's Session Coaches offering support and expertise to help further develop the skills and knowledge of our own archery leaders.



Overall, the Leaders-Only Archery Development Programme has been a significant success, providing meaningful CPD opportunities, strengthening relationships with external clubs, improving standards of practice and establishing a sustainable framework for the continued development of archery within the County.

Chris Patterson – County Archery Team

Paddlesport

The County Paddlers have continued to paddle individually with their Groups over recent months, although collective County activity has been relatively limited during the year. Even the Forest of Dean District's annual Paddle Day at Mallards Pike was unable to take place due to Forestry Commission restrictions.

The notable exception was the programme organised by Prestbury GLV Chris Whisker and various District Team Members, who ran several indoor pool sessions for Beavers and Squirrels. Activities included water safety, kayaking, walking across kayaks and controlled capsizes. These were fantastic sessions where young people and adults alike had a great time in, on and around the water.

A steady number of Canoe and Kayak Permit renewals have been undertaken, together with several new Stand-Up Paddleboarding permits.

Paddlesport training and supervision also took place in support of Duke of Edinburgh's Award activities within Stroud District.

We have begun to establish a relationship with Sarah Keight Outdoor Adventure Coach, who has delivered Paddlesport Safety and Rescue and Paddlesport Instructor courses to meet the competence requirements of the B1 Permit. Leaders interested in these courses are encouraged to get in touch.

We are currently in discussion with a charity that operates from a new gravel lake in the Cotswolds and are hopeful that, over the coming winter, we can secure a permanent location for Gloucestershire Scouting to operate from. Permit holders will be contacted early in the process so that we can understand what they would like to see from a dedicated paddlesport venue.

If you have any kit or resources that may assist with the development of a dedicated paddlesport facility, please contact Stewart Tedaldi.

Stewart Tedaldi and Chris Whisker – County Paddlesport Team



Duke of Edinburgh's Award (DofE)

Scouting in Gloucestershire is full of amazing young people, but you knew that. Just over the past 12 months alone those of you doing your DofE awards Volunteering sections through Gloucestershire Scouts have contributed an outstanding 1053 hours of volunteering in your communities. Please join us in congratulating 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.





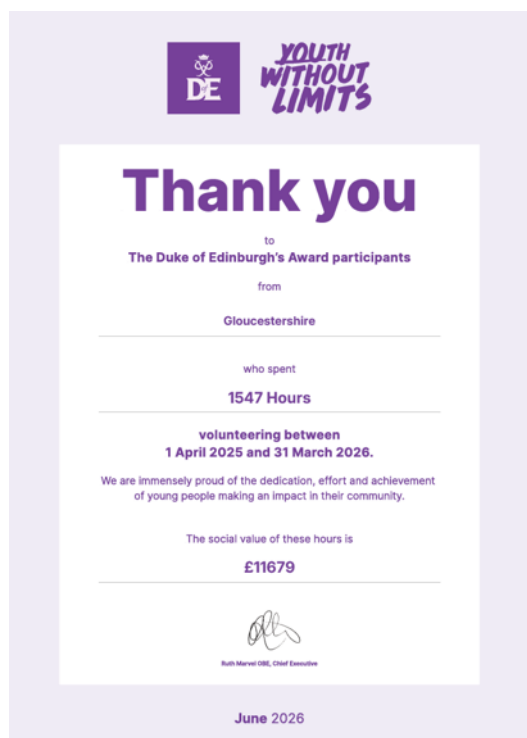
Gold – **Caitlin, Georgia, Jeremy** (Forest of Dean), **Samuel** (Gloucester), **Olivia** (Stroud & Tetbury), **Emily, George** (Tewkesbury)



Silver – **Owen** (Gloucester), **AbuBakr, Issy, Laura, Noah, Rupert** (Stroud & Tetbury), **Elliot** (Tewkesbury)



Bronze – **Ben** (Cheltenham), **Will** (Forest of Dean), **Archie, Finlay** (Gloucester), **Amelie, Isobel** (Stroud & Tetbury), **Amelie, Luke** (Tewkesbury)



Around the County there are lots more of you busily working towards your DofE Awards, currently 44 for Bronze, 52 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 Charity shops, Riding for the Disabled, St John's Ambulance, Girlguiding, parkrun, sports 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 dinghy sailing, street dancing, bouldering, climbing and dog agility!

While the physical, skill and volunteering sections are the ones that take the time and commitments over the weeks and months, Expeditions are often seen as the adventure and exciting part that grabs the attention. Over the past 12 months we've seen some amazing Explorers undertaking their Bronze expedition in the Forest of Dean and Silver ones around the Black Mountains, on Dartmoor and in the Forest of Dean. By

the time you read this, Tewkesbury District Explorers hope to have completed another Silver Expedition, cycling in the valleys of South Wales. 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.

This doesn't happen by accident and behind the scenes are some very generous adults giving their time to create opportunities and support these young people. 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

Explorer Belt

It is with great pleasure that we announce that Hannah Paveley, our Deputy County Youth Lead, achieved her explorer belt this year. Well done and many congratulations.



International

The last year has been a bit of a roller coaster for me personally and I must start by expressing my thanks to Chris Meadows and the whole International team for making sure that all the planned recruitment of leaders and roadshows for young people and parents went ahead without me when I was taking sick leave. Special thanks to Chris M for picking up on the 'boring but necessary' checking of plans and authorising Visits Abroad.

Looking back at Visits Abroad in 2025 –

These were all just plans as I wrote last year's report.

The biggest trip was led by Mark Westwood from the Forest of Dean, taking 38 Scouts and Explorers to camp in Belgium. The programme included traditional camp activities, city and museum visits and a visit to the Menin Gate for the WW1 memorial. Many thanks to Mark for leading this and especially for training up some younger adults ready for next time!

Adders Tongue Explorers went to Normandy, staying in a hostel in Bayeaux. Some highlights of their trip were a visit to the Bayeaux Tapestry, a trip to Caen and the opportunity not just to visit the D Day landing museum, but to kayak around the remains of the Mulberry Harbour. Special commendation to Nigel Wachs for keeping the trip on track after having a serious accident and to the Scouting spirit of his team that allowed Nigel to join the trip despite his crutches.

The final visit abroad of 2025, in December, was the furthest away with the smallest numbers. Sarah Hick from Enigma Explorers went as staff to New Zealand for NZ Venture 2026. Despite the extreme storms, Sarah and the Explorers she was leading had a great time and coped well with a change of expedition plan from hiking to kayaking.

If you're looking to take your own group abroad, these three very different trips show just how individual a trip abroad can be and are a reminder that you don't need to wait for a County-led trip to give your young people an international adventure (but do discuss your plans with me at an early stage, so we can make sure you have all the necessary permits etc).

Visits Abroad in 2026

Again, we have had three trips so far in 2026:

In February, four leaders from Woodmancote sensibly went on a recce visit to Kandersteg International Scout Centre, in preparation for a winter trip with the troop in February 2027. This has given them first-hand knowledge of the conditions and activities they can expect next year.

Six adults from Gloucestershire, co-ordinated by Ali Andrews, have gone to the Danish National Jamboree as part of their International Service Team. This is a regularly held large National camp for all Danish scouts and international guests. It is usually 30,000 to 40,000 participants and this year's will be a practice run for the World Scout Jamboree in 2031.

Still to set off, we have another visit to Kandersteg – this time Tristram Lowes is leading a trip for Newent Scouts. They will be camping at KISC and taking advantage of the campsite's guides to experience some high-altitude summer walking.

2027 – getting everyone in Gloucestershire Abroad

Our four County-led international adventures for 2027 are well into the planning, preparing and fundraising stages. Leaders and young people have been recruited and team building events are underway. These are:

Gloucestershire Unit for the World Scout Jamboree in Poland, led by Matt Evans; Gloucestershire Unit for the Haarlem Jamborette in the Netherlands, led by Chris Whisker and Hannah Hughes. Chris Slater has been so successful in recruiting young people for a County trip to the Zellhof Scouting Centre in Austria that the young people are going as two groups, on consecutive weeks so that they have the chance to mix with scouts from other countries.

Phil Horsfield is running another Explorer Belt Expedition to Poland, for teams of Explorers. This opportunity has been extended to Network members as well. As in previous years, the team will share leader support with Strathclyde Scouts.

What about you?

International activities don't have to take place overseas. There are plenty of programme ideas online to help you bring the reality of our global movement to your own troop, pack, colony or drey.

Do get in touch if you'd like to know more about either taking your young people abroad or putting an international element into your regular Scouting.

Chris Langham – International Team Lead

strategy evolution discover

Strategy & Evolution 2026 – ten years on the ground

2026 marked our tenth physical edition of Strategy & Evolution and our second Discover and it was one to be proud of. Strategy welcomed 2,525 young people, Evolution brought together 931 young people and Discover had 387 of our youngest members. In total, almost 4,000 young people from Scouting and Girlguiding attended the three events.

None of it happens without our volunteers. Across all three events, well over 200 gave their time to site build, activities, logistics, first aid, catering, welfare and everything in between. Twelve years in, that generosity is still the heartbeat of the whole event.

This milestone year was also about listening and improving. The biggest change was to site layout, moving Admin to the entry point onto the camping field – a straightforward shift that made a real difference to being able to manage more effectively who was on site. We invested in a new shipping container and laid over 60 tonnes of hardcore across the storage compound, so it is now accessible and workable year-round rather than just in summer. Ageing kit was replaced, including our well-used grill and we upgraded lots of the water facilities on site with the introduction of a new water pumping system, new wash tent sinks (we promise there aren't sheep missing a water trough or two!) and the hiring of a shower block. We have continued developing our systems, such as our operations tracker so issues and incidents are logged and managed more effectively.

We also outsourced traffic management this year, introducing road closures to reduce the impact of the event on local residents – something we know matters to our neighbours as much as it does to us; and we used a security contractor to provide support to steward the entrance and exit gates during peak times. Alongside that came a run of smaller but worthwhile changes: new walking route signage, a rebuilt bar structure and a trial of new catering portion sizes and food options with a local Scout group and much, much more.

Ten physical editions in, Strategy & Evolution have now welcomed almost 30,000 young people since we began. That number keeps growing, but what stays constant is the experience at the heart of it - young people trying something new, building confidence, and making memories that last well beyond the weekend.

As the team evolves, we want to say a huge thank you and farewell to two brilliant leads moving on from the core team: Charlotte, our Admin Lead, and Dan, who has led the Strategy main event for the last few years and been in programme for many more – both have shaped these events for the better.

We're also delighted that Luke will be taking on the mantle of Event Director and we know Strategy & Evolution are in great hands as they continue to grow and improve.

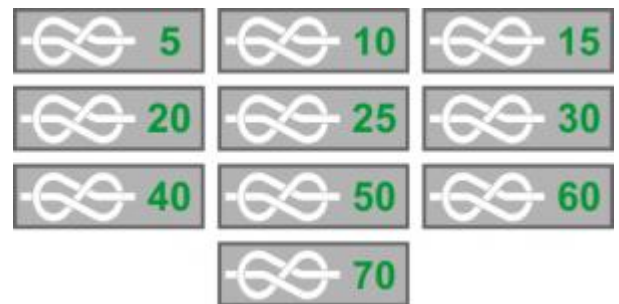
Thank you to everyone who gave an hour, a day, a week or more to make 2026 such a success. If reading this has got you thinking about getting involved, we'd love to hear from you.

Lewis Dangerfield – Event Director



Significant Long Service Awards

This year we would also like to commemorate those volunteers who have significant long service:



60 Years

Ann Haseler

50 Years

Alan Hayward, David Herbert, Heather Mitchell, Chris Brewster

40 Years

Ron Shell, Caroline Etheridge, David Adkins, Gillian Dickinson, Cherilynn Grinnell

30 Years

Mary Lodwig, Stephanie Ovens, Shane Johnson, Lesley Herbert

25 Years

Damian Foster, Teresa Patterson, Sara Millin, Andrew Barton, Geoff Dixon, James Newman, Micheal Seamarks, Christopher Edmunds, Mark Greening, Andrew Keighley

20 Years

Lauren Proctor, Simon Jefferies, Guy O'Malley, Theresa Mansbridge, Natasha Allen, Joanne Aspinall, Stephen Hanks, Shirley Jones, Daniel Kidger

15 Years

Michelle Vaughan, Christopher Ryan, Peter Ryan, Terry Hobbs, Wendy Binks, Tracey Lashford, Tracy Barrell, Jackie Burge, Chris Slater, Katrina Topping, Rishona Steward, Lucy Cooper, Simon Holmes, Matthew Evans, Robert Potter, Liz Orchard, Nicola Fendt

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 over the past 12 months.

Silver Wolf



Paul Trott, Pam Tovey, Gareth Ovens

Bar to the Silver Acorn



Heather Taylor

Silver Acorn



Richard Large, Rosemary Trott, Linda Faulkner, Derek Platt, Chris Lodwig, Ian Orr, Louise Little, Peter Shute, Rob Rowles

Bar to the Award for Merit



Paul Etheridge, Adam Griffiths

Award for Merit



Ashley Freeman, Matthew Latham, Keith Latha, Rebecca Lifton-Taylor, Deborah Whitfield, Gareth Farrell, Lynsey Platt, Alex Bingle, Christopher Shute, Dan Orchard, Douglas Keay, Fred Noble, Judith Jefferies, Mark Horwood, Mark Batchelor, Nicky Burcher, Alex Chestnutt, Guy O'Malley, Hannah Fitzgerald

British Empire Medal (BEM)



(June) Ann Apperley

Round the Districts

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

Cheltenham

This has been a fantastic year for Cheltenham District where we have seen significant growth in most of our Groups.

Of particular interest is the number of young people who want to join Squirrels. One of our Dreys has moved from 5 members a year ago to 20 members now with a waiting list.

Most of our Groups have lots of young people wanting to join their waiting lists. However, the usual frustration is that we can't find either the additional adults to run new sections and, in some communities, there isn't the space available to accommodate new sections. With the new homes being built around our town, more thought needs to be given to providing community buildings where youth groups can meet.

One of our key successes this year has been in recruiting new leaders. We have used a number of different online platforms to advertise our need for more adults. At the end of my first year as DLV I feel the district is in great shape and we all look forward to another outstanding year for Scouting in Cheltenham.

Chris Brewster – District Lead Volunteer

Cotswold

A year of change here in the Cotswolds. The 1st Cirencester group is currently suspended due to a shortage of volunteers and South Cerney has seen a shift in leadership, with Dan Sweet stepping down as GLV and Rachel Garrett taking up the baton. Jessie Wheeler is also moving from South Cerney to 2nd Cirencester (Stratton).

Meanwhile, Lucy Tregoning has taken on the leadership of the District Explorer Unit (Dobunni) and the section is going from strength to strength, with an international trip already in the works.

Special thanks to Phil Cottey and Lucy Tregoning for bringing the district together for a fantastic District Centenary Camp at Eastcombe. It was a wonderful weekend full of fun, new friendships and a real sense of the district pulling together as one.

It was also a great pleasure to present Phil Cottey with his Commendation Award during the camp - a fitting moment of recognition in front of the young people and volunteers he has supported so tirelessly.

We are still seeking a District Lead Volunteer — or a small leadership team — to help move the district forward and shape its next chapter.

My sincere thanks go to everyone across the district who continue to ensure our young people flourish, learn new skills and enjoy the adventures of a lifetime. Your dedication keeps Scouting thriving in the Cotswolds, even through times of change.

Carole O'Donnell – Acting District Lead Volunteer



Cotswold Vale

If there's one thing Cotswold Vale doesn't do very well, it's stand still. Another year has flown by and what a year it has been!

Looking back, it's hard not to be incredibly proud of everything our young people, volunteers and Groups have achieved together. From muddy adventures to community service, from new beginnings to exciting plans for the future, Cotswold Vale has certainly been busy.

Our young people have enjoyed another action-packed year, with far too many activities to list here. They've explored the night sky while stargazing, tested their teamwork in laser tag, learnt valuable lessons in fire safety, built dens, cycled, developed their map reading skills, discovered wildlife on nature walks, tried pond dipping, got creative with crafts, cooked up some delicious treats, tackled pioneering projects, enjoyed tubing adventures, rolled up their sleeves for gardening and even helped keep our local communities tidy through litter picking ... phew! It's fair to say there hasn't been much time left for sitting still.

Across the District, Groups proudly took part in Remembrance parades representing Scouting with dignity and respect. It is always wonderful to see our young people honouring those who came before us.

One of the real highlights this year has been seeing Groups work together more than ever before. Whether it was Cubs enjoying a sleepover at Go Bananas, Scouts having adventures on the water and sharing archery experiences or Beaver and Squirrel sleepovers, collaboration across the District has helped young people make new friends and experience even more opportunities.

Sharing ideas and celebrating success has become easier this year with the launch of The Cotswold Beacon. The newsletter has helped keep volunteers connected across the District, showcasing the fantastic activities taking place and reminding us just how much is happening across Cotswold Vale.

Our St George's Day celebration was another fantastic occasion bringing the District together to celebrate everything Scouting stands for. Events like these remind us just how strong our Scouting family really is.

Competition arrived for our Beavers as we held our very first District Soft Archery Competition. Huge congratulations go to Slimbridge who can proudly claim the honour of being our inaugural champions.



Our Scouts and Explorers once again brought festive cheer by hosting their annual Christmas party complete with one particularly memorable investiture. Where else but Scouting would Father Christmas find himself investing a brand new Explorer?

Another first for me was a Volunteer Thank You Evening hosted in the autumn. This was a wonderful opportunity to celebrate the incredible people who give up so much of their own time to make Scouting possible. Volunteers are at the heart of everything we do and it was important to me that they know just how much I appreciate them. Quite simply, it can't happen without them.



Looking ahead we are incredibly proud that young people from Cotswold Vale will be representing us at international camps in 2027 where they will make memories and friendships to last a lifetime.

Closer to home, plans are well underway for a District Beaver Birthday Camp giving our younger members a chance to celebrate together in true Scouting style.

Growth has continued across the District with a new Cub Pack opening in Slimbridge and a brand new Squirrel Drey in Berkeley. We've also recruited some volunteers to form a Trustee Board at Nailsworth and work is progressing on making a decision about what to do with their HQ.

We're also celebrating success in adult development. Cotswold Vale now has a Nights Away Assessor and a growing number of volunteers have gained their Nights Away Permit opening the door to even more adventures for our young people.

As with every year, we've seen change within our adult volunteer teams. We've said goodbye to some experienced leaders who have given so much to Scouting over the years and we thank them sincerely for everything they've given.

At the same time, we've welcomed new volunteers who are already bringing fresh enthusiasm, new ideas and plenty of energy. There's always room for more people to join us, particularly in governance roles where additional support would make a real difference. As I write, Sharpness is currently undertaking a recruitment campaign with the hope of securing volunteers to re-open the Cub Pack in September.

As I reflect on another remarkable year, one thing stands out above everything else – the people. Our young people continue to amaze us with their enthusiasm, courage and willingness to have a go. Our volunteers continue to give countless hours so that adventures can happen week after week, parents and carers support us and our communities continue to welcome us.

My thanks to everyone who has played a part in making Cotswold Vale such a thriving District. I'm looking forward to another year of muddy boots, campfire songs, unforgettable adventures, new friendships and making even more memories together.

Deborah Whitfield – District Lead Volunteer

Forest of Dean

This year we have again seen some growth among the membership taking the details from the annual census collated in January 2026. We can see a growth of 4 young people in the Squirrels section this year. However taking into account we opened a new Drey last year, this is not a real growth jump we would expect. Beavers have dropped to 152 this year.

Cubs section has shown a rise in numbers this year from 192 to 200 showing some sign of growth. Most packs have maintained their numbers by intake from their Beaver sections. Scouts this year is down to 171 showing some drop off between cubs and Scouts. The Explorer section this year has a total membership number of 64 across the district showing a drop off of 24. There needs to be some attention paid to moving on processes across the board, supporting our young members is vital to maintain our membership. Members need to be moved on appropriately and at the right age following the right process.

Scout Network is showing a rate of growth and is now showing a true figure of those who are active members, those who are at university and those who are in transition between OSM and Digital tools.

Waiting lists are down all round so we are able to offer more places for our youth membership. However, these still show the need for more lower sections across the district. However, this means we also need more leaders. We have a total membership of 971.

Total number of leaders in the district stand at 310 showing a growth in support for the movement. We have lost and gained along the way this year. Kevin Bond stood down as GLV at 1st Cinderford and Sarah Hills has come across from the Trustees board to take the on the Challenge of the GLV role. Richard Meek continues to support both 1st Clearwell and Sling and 1st St Briavels. However, we hope that by September, Daniel Cotton will be taking over at 1st Clearwell and Sling. Tristan Lowes stood down from the role as GLV at 1st Newent and Matt Johnson has been acting as GLV in the interim.

Group Governance roles show a total of 64, this is a true number and has included the missing members from last year where I reported 56 in role. District Management roles are currently at 13, showing that we are now filling some roles that have been empty for a while. Lily Keighley has joined as Activities Lead, Sam McDonagh as Scout Lead. Andrew Morgan-Watts has now taken on the SLT role of Support and Anita Maxwell joins the senior Leadership Team as 14-24 Lead. We have an additional 66 members in the Support Team who represent those who would have been in groups, Scout Active Support and Retired Members.

The Senior Leadership Team is now complete with no empty roles. In addition, we welcome Sarah Stokes as our Change Champion who will join the SLT so they can identify areas of need and report back any progress she has made along the way. Please reach out to Sarah with all your change issues.

This leaves us with a total adult membership of 310, an increase of 51 across the year. The new calculations this year has been more accrete as last year was a muddle between hand counting and the data base upload. So, if you're referencing from the last year report, numbers don't always align but I'm confident that this is now a true and honest reflection of our membership. Our challenges this year are: completing our RAG assessments of our Trustees Boards, increasing our leadership base and building on our historical records as we reach our group centenaries.

Mark Stapleton – District Lead Volunteer

Gloucester

53rd Cotswold Marathon



The Virtual Cotswold Marathon was held throughout January. 194 people signed up for the virtual event with entries ranging from squirrels through to adults. A total of 6734 miles was achieved with 58 people completing the 50-mile Platinum challenge.

For the main event in February, 437 entered with 425 starting the walk. Overall numbers were slightly down on the 2025 event although maximum numbers were reached for the Bronze and Silver Marathons. For safety and logistical reasons Bronze numbers were restricted to around 250 which meant that we unfortunately had to turn away a few people.

Local groups performed very well with a leader's team from Gloucester winning the Lowery Trophy, in the Gold section, with the fastest overall time of 7hrs 19min. The Junior Trophy was won by The Unmentionable ESU in a time of 11hrs 36mins. In the Silver section Nutty Badgers ESU won the Sealey Trophy in a time of 7hrs 8mins. Scouts from 1st Upton St Leonards entered the Bronze route with one team being fastest winning the Gait Trophy in a time of 2hrs 53mins and another team winning the Male Trophy in the time of 3hrs 9mins.

Many thanks to the 150 staff and helpers that supported the event and thanks to the Marathon Team for their hard work and dedication.

Next year's event will be held on 6th/7th February 2027.

Gloucester Gang Show 26



The 2026 show was a great success with 64 main gang members and the Mini Gang cast of 21 youngsters aged 6-9 taking to the stage. The mini gang stole the hearts of our audience members.

It was very impressive to see how they embraced Gang Show, adapting from their rehearsals at Murray Hall to performing at the Bacon Theatre.

Each year the main gang brings incredible talent to the stage. The producers are constantly dazzled by their growth in confidence and self-belief by show week. Scouting and Guiding friendships are built and memories created to last a lifetime.

The show provides an excellent advert for Scouting and Guiding in Gloucester District and a showcase for the many talented young people in our city.

Credit must go to the committee together with the production and backstage teams who work tirelessly for months on end to achieve incredible results. We consider ourselves very lucky to have such talent and dedication across all our teams.

At the end of the show week, we said a very big thank you to Sally Russan, who stepped down from her role as Show Chair. We are very grateful for the commitment and dedication that she has shown to the show.

Moving forward to the 2027 we welcome Emily Wood and Sarah Baker who are the new Co-Chairs.

St. George's Day

Unfortunately, Gloucester Cathedral could not accommodate the whole of the district this year due to the organ repairs that needed to be completed by end of April. Instead, there will be a celebration later in the year. The Cathedral has already been booked for the parade service on the 25th April 2027.

Cub-Fun Day

In May the District Cubs held a fun day at Cattle Country organised by our District Cub Team. Around 130 young people from various groups from the District attended and great fun was had by them all.

Strategy, Evolution and Discover

Many groups from the District attended the three great events held at Cirencester Park in June. Congratulations to the 51st Gloucester (Lonsdale) Cubs who won the unaccompanied team prize and the football competition at Evolution.

Awards and Recognition

We congratulate June (Ann) Apperley who was awarded the British Empire Medal (BEM) in the Kings Birthday Hours List for services to Scouting and the community in Gloucester and Gloucestershire. Special mention must also go to Paul Trott and Pam Tovey who have been awarded the Silver Wolf following many years of service to Scouting.

Numerous other awards were presented throughout the year to our fellow Scout leaders for their incredible service and commitment.

Search for a new DLV

The search for a new DLV continues. Please make contact if you are interested and would like further information.

Alan Faulkner – Acting District Lead Volunteer



North Cotswold

What a year North Cotswold has had! A District St George's Day, a Beaver Birthday party, community events and lots of fun evenings!

This year for me has been all about meeting as many volunteers as I could in the District. Having not grown-up Scouting in North Cotswold, I wanted to get my face seen and let people know I was there to support with anything they needed.



My first week, I ended up in Bourton-on-the-Water watching yellow rubber ducks float through the middle of the village with volunteers following behind, knee deep in water! The Scout were hosting a duck race (very common sight there) to raise money and it was great to see so many of their volunteers and young people helping. My duck even managed to come second!

Chipping Camden have also been very community active this year as they celebrate 100 years of their Scout Group. As well as celebrating within the group, they have decided to challenge themselves to complete 100 acts of service around the community with each Squirrel, Beaver, Cub and Scout in attendance counting as 1 act. This is a great way for them to make their presence known whilst giving back to their local area.

A success this year was the first face-to-face AGM in the District for 4 years being held at Moreton-in-the-Marsh Scout Hut. There were representatives from all four groups present and it was a great way to start off the year.



The Explorers in the District have been very busy as well. North Cotswold and Shipston ESU decided they would like to achieve an environmental project so organised to help out on their local canal. The Explorers planned the trip themselves, contacting organisations, fundraising and leading the trip, supported by their leaders. Random ESU have been active attending County camps and learning navigation in their local area.

In June I was invited to visit a Beaver birthday party held by some of the groups in Moreton. The Beavers took part in activities including a scavenger hunt and making a cake out of what they could find in the woods. They finished by singing happy birthday and eating cake!

The District also had a very successful St George's Day organised by the team at Sevenhampton Scout Group – there was a parade through the village followed by a service at the village hall. The Scouts learnt about the story of St George, the origin of the left handshake and were encouraged to meet new

people with a bingo card of people to find! A big thank you to Smurf, Clare and the team for their efforts in organising and sourcing the cakes and refreshments!

To finish I would like to say a few thank yous. Thank you to the Group Leads in the district – Peter and Nick, Randall, Oli and Smurf– for all you do to support your Groups and the hard work of recruiting and keeping volunteers. Thank you to all the amazing volunteers in the District who turn up week after week and give the young people amazing experiences. Thank you to the trustees who have supported me in being District Lead for the first time – your knowledge has been invaluable. Here's to another amazing 12 months of Scouting! I am also making a New Scouting Year resolution to take more photos for next year's report!

Kat Holter – District Lead Volunteer

Tewkesbury

What a year! Since taking on this role in September 2025, I have been non-stop with visits, planning and admin!

It has been a great year for Tewkesbury, highlights include opening two new squirrel dreys, a Beaver birthday party and handing out lots of certificates.

In January, we welcomed two new Squirrel dreys into the District, both 1st Woodmancote and 1st Gotherington have added our youngest section to their numbers and I was able to visit both drey's opening nights. The teams are doing a fantastic job of introducing the Squirrels to the world of Scouting and have both been on evenings out of their huts, exploring their local communities.



In June, I was able to visit 1st Woodmancote Beavers who held a triple-colony camp to celebrate 40 years of Beavers. They had a hike, Scout skills activities, a campfire and on the Sunday learnt some circus skills. It has been great to see how different groups have celebrated the big birthday and I'm looking forward to more events for the rest of 2026!

As a District with a prominent river flowing through it, we are a big fan of water activities and we have worked hard to give as many young people the opportunity to go out on the water this year. We have an affiliate membership with Severn Sailing Club, allowing us to use their club as a get-in point, store our bell-boat and use the facilities during sessions. Having this base makes it very easy to get groups on the water and we have facilitated nearly 20 sessions of water activities this summer. Our hope is to be able to increase this next year and expand our team of permit holders. A big thank you to the water team for running the sessions and to the Sailing Club for allowing us to use the facilities!



Earlier this year, I was contacted about an exciting new opportunity for our District. The newly elected Mayor of Tewkesbury, Councillor George Porter, was interested in appointing a Mayor's Scout to serve during his term of office. Councillor Porter and I met to discuss the requirements of the role. We subsequently advertised the opportunity to Explorers across the District, inviting applications from those who consistently demonstrate Scout values and who would be outstanding ambassadors

for the movement at civic events. Following the selection process, Aidan Harrison of Red Wolves Explorer Scout Unit was appointed as Tewkesbury's first Mayor's Scout. In this role, Aidan will attend a variety of civic engagements alongside the Mayor, representing our District. Aidan was officially recognised at the Council's Annual General Meeting in May.

During the year I have also been able to visit lots of groups and sessions, from first aid to communication and money skills to Earth Tribe. It has been amazing to see the wide range of experiences the young people in the District have been taking part in and I am excited to see what they do next!

I was delighted to be able to attend the King's Scout presentation of two of our younger leaders this year. This was the last part of their award so hopefully both of them will be able to attend Windsor next year once they have their final sign off. It has been great to see top awards being achieved from Squirrels to Network and I am hopeful we can continue this in the next year.

To finish I would like to say a few thanks. Firstly to Carole and the County team for trusting me with this role; secondly to the Group Leads in the district – Nic, Margaret, Ian, Mark and Derek – for keeping your Groups going and supporting their volunteers; thirdly to all the amazing volunteers in the District who turn up week after week and give the young people amazing experiences; fourthly to the trustees who have supported the transition between District Leads.

And finally, to the team at my old Cub pack for allowing me to hand over the reins and supporting me to take on this new role! Here's to another amazing 12 months of Scouting!

Kat Holter – District Lead Volunteer



Final Words

As another remarkable year of Scouting in Gloucestershire draws to a close, we can see together the incredible journeys our young people have undertaken. From the first day of the year to the last campfire of the season, our county and all its members, both volunteers and young people, have grown stronger, wiser and more united than ever before. This review is not just a celebration of achievements - it is a tribute to every member who made this year truly unforgettable.

Looking back at the past year, it is impossible not to feel an overwhelming sense of pride. As a county we participated in numerous community events, completed hundreds of service hours and earned badges that represent skills across the whole spectrum.

Camping trips challenged our young members to push beyond their comfort zones, while community events helped them understand the true value of giving back. Each milestone achieved this year was a stepping stone toward building character, resilience and lifelong values.

New members both young people and adults joined with curiosity and enthusiasm, bonds were formed across all ages and backgrounds and their Scouting journey started.

To everyone one of you who has laced up their boots, showed up whether in rain or sunshine, I **thank you**. Your dedication and enthusiasm have been the heartbeat of our county. Your contributions have mattered more than words can express. Every effort, no matter how small, has left a lasting impression on our young people and our communities.

Carole

