

**Barlaston & Tittensor Scout Group**

**Trustees’ Annual Report**

For period 01.01.2023 to 31.12.2023

**Reference and Administration details**

Charity name: Barlaston & Tittensor Scout Group

Registered Charity No.: 524508

Scout HQ Registration No.:

Address: The Scout Hut

Station Road,

Barlaston

Staffordshire

ST12 9DQ

Charity Trustees

Chair Paul Westwood

Treasurer Julia Spight

Secretary Elizabeth Peck (from 08.03.2023)

GSL Gareth Westwood

SL Marj Jopson

CSL Kay Royle

BSL Gavin Statham

Parent Rep Stefan Park (from 17.02.2023)

Active Support Rebecca Loughhead

Advisers

Surveyor Paul Beardmore

Scrutineer Leigh Whiteside

**Structure, Governance and Management**

The Group's governing documents are those of the The Scout Association. They consist of a Royal Charter, which in turn gives authority to the Bye Laws of the Association and The Policy, Organisation and Rules of The Scout Association.

The Group is a trust established under its rules which are common to all Scouts.

The Trustees are appointed in accordance with the Policy, Organisation and Rules of The Scout Association.

The Group is managed by the Group Trustee Board, the members of which are the ‘Charity Trustees’ of the Scout Group which is an educational charity. As charity trustees they are responsible for complying with legislation applicable to charities. This includes the registration, keeping proper accounts and making returns to the Charity Commission as appropriate.

The Board consists of 3 independent representatives, Chair, Treasurer and Secretary together with the Group Scout Leaders, individual section leaders (if opted to take on the responsibility) and parent’s representation and meets every odd months (Jan, Mar, May, etc).

Members of the Trustee Board complete *'Essential Information for Trustee Board'* training within the first 5 months of joining the board.

This Group Trustee Board exists to support the Group Scout Leader in meeting the responsibilities of the appointments and is responsible for:
The maintenance of Group property;
The raising of funds and the administration of Group finance;
The insurance of persons, property and equipment;
Group public occasions;
Assisting in the recruitment of leaders and other adult support;
Appointing any sub committees that may be required;
Appointing Group Administrators and Advisors other than those who are elected.

**Risk and Internal Control**
The Group Trustee Board has identified the major risks to which they believe the Group is exposed, these have been reviewed and systems have been established to mitigate against them. The main areas of concern that have been identified are:

Damage to the building, property and equipment. The Group would request the use of buildings, property and equipment from neighbouring organisations such as the church, community centre and other Scout Groups. Similar reciprocal arrangements exist with these organisations. The Group has sufficient buildings and contents insurance in place to mitigate against permanent loss.

Injury to leaders, helpers, supporters and members. The Group through the capitation fees contributes to the Scout Associations national accident insurance policy. Risk Assessments are undertaken before all activities.

Reduced income from fund raising. The Group is primarily reliant upon income from subscriptions and fundraising. The group does hold a reserve to ensure the continuity of activities should there be a major reduction in income. The Board could raise the value of subscriptions to increase the income to the group on an ongoing basis, either temporarily or permanently.

Reduction or loss of leaders. The group is totally reliant upon volunteers to run and administer the activities of the group. If there was a reduction in the number of leaders to an unacceptable level in a particular section or the group as a whole then there would have to be a contraction, consolidation or closure of a section. In the worst case scenario the complete closure of the Group.

Reduction or loss of members. The Group provides activities for all young people aged 6 to 18. If there was a reduction in membership in a particular section or the group as whole then there would have to be a contraction, consolidation or closure of a section. In the worst case scenario the complete closure of the Group.

**Objectives and Activities**

**The Purpose of Scouting**
Scouting exists to actively engage and support young people in their personal development,
empowering them to make a positive contribution to society.

**The Values of Scouting**
As Scouts we are guided by these values:
**Integrity -** We act with integrity; we are honest, trustworthy and loyal.
**Respect -** We have self-respect and respect for others.
**Care -** We support others and take care of the world in which we live.
**Belief -** We explore our faiths, beliefs and attitudes.
**Co-operation -** We make a positive difference; we co-operate with others and make friends.

**The Scout Method**
Scouting takes place when young people, in partnership with adults, work together based on the
values of Scouting and:
- enjoy what they are doing and have fun
- take part in activities indoors and outdoors
- learn by doing
- share in spiritual reflection
- take responsibility and make choices
- undertake new and challenging activities
- make and live by their Promise.

**Main Activities**

The group’s main activities are centred around a programme of weekly term-time section meetings for Beavers, Cubs and Scouts as well as regular camps and other creative and adventurous outside activities.

The Group considers individual applications for grants towards appropriate training courses for both young and adult members. It also considers applications for grants in respect of financial hardship experienced by a member. All within the confines of its financial controls

It must be acknowledged that all the roles undertaken within the Group are done so on a voluntary basis. This includes all the uniformed and non-uniformed leaders, the Trustee Board and maintenance helpers.

The Group meets the Charity Commission's public benefit criteria under both the advancement of education and the advancement of citizenship or community development headings.

**Achievements and Performance**

Amilie, Kay and Gav, Beaver Scout Leader, have been supported by the GSL to provide a well-balanced programme, delivering team-building and developing new skills whilst having fun.

2023 was the first full calendar year for Beavers at Barlaston & Tittensor since covid and with this new team.

135 badges have been issued this year including 4 challenge badges. We firmly believe that in the coming year, when we have had beavers for a full 2-year term, we will be awarding several bronze awards at the end of 2024.

Kay has too completed a year as Cub leader and is pleased report the Cub section have had a steady rate of attendance. We currently have 15 cubs, with none on our waiting list.

We could easily manage up to a maximum of 18 at a session, but would definitely need more leaders to consider any larger numbers.

Presently we have 3 invested leaders and a non-scout youth volunteer. We also have the regular help and input of our GSL.

This year we have awarded: 5 Silver chief scout awards and 186 badges altogether.

We had an excellent number partake in the group camp which was enjoyed by one and all.

Sadly, we have failed to recruit any girls to the group this year. I’m sure this could be rectified if only we could attract 2 or 3 at the same time and perhaps could be an aspiration for 2024.

Marj has noted that the Scout section has increased membership over the last year, with a number of Cubs moving up. We have focussed on the challenge badges in the programme and have a few Scouts on track to achieve their Gold Award in the next year. We have just launched the YouShape award and have received some great feedback on ways Scouting could be improved for our members, we will be trying to set some of these in motion in the coming months.

Maintenance Team

Improvements to, and maintenance of, our HQ are of course a continuous and never-ending project. The grounds maintenance is ever present with weeds, nettles, brambles, trees, hedges and grass all demanding our attention on a fairly regular basis. Painting and repairing the external cladding have continued but has again been thwarted by inclement weather on our designated maintenance Saturdays. Exterior lighting to the gate and driveway has also continued and the current phase is all but complete. The kitchen has had a lick of paint to keep that ball rolling. The dividing wall between the hall and stores has been rebuilt in readiness for some future work and as part of our Asbestos Management Plan. More exterior lights and decoration, interior heating & electrics, guttering & downspouts and kitchen improvements will continue and be our focus in the short term. As always, another huge thank-you to everyone who helped with this work, you know who you are.

Our **regular maintenance** days will continue, on the **second Saturday of every even month**, over the next twelve months and a little bit of help from everyone will go a long way - please make sure you can do your bit to spread the load.

Trustee Board - Governance

The Trustee Board are always looking at ways to move our headquarters towards the best possible condition and, notwithstanding the areas described in the Maintenance Team’s achievements, improvements to the Hall’s storage and the toilet/washing facilities are on our medium/longer-term wish list.

As can be seen from the financial review and annual accounts, our finances continue to be relatively stable, as they have been for a few years now. Accordingly, we have managed to make available finances to satisfy our mandatory commitments, support the sections when required, maintain our reserves and save/invest towards future projects.

It has been a pleasure to welcome Liz and Stefan to the Board of Trustees in 2023 and I hope we shall have many years of fun and friendship carrying out our respective roles together. We, the Trustees, are a friendly bunch and we will welcome additional volunteers to assist us in any capacity, with open arms.

During 2024, The Scout Association is embarking on a major transformation of many of its roles, structures, titles, responsibilities, etc. This will undoubtedly have an impact on the Group and the work of the Groups’ Trustee Board, if for no other reason, that all our policies, risk assessments, documents, etc will need to be amended/updated to reflect the new changes. Some of these changes will also include a new computer system which, once rolled out, will inevitably have glitches to be ‘accommodated’ and/or worked around. It is hoped that all these changes will not adversely affect Gareth and the Section Leaders’ delivery of the weekly programme. Getting through the next year with minimal disruption should be a target achievement for 2024.

Thank you to everyone who has attended our Trustee Board meetings over the last year and helped us with the good governance of our group.

We also, as a group, welcome the opportunity to continue working with Stone District and their new Chair.

I must also formally register, on behalf of The Trustee Board, a big thank-you to all our Section Leaders, Assistants and Helpers, all our parent and other helpers who have given their time and/or expertise at various functions, events, etc through the year. And again, of course, a big thank-you to Gareth, our Group Lead Volunteer for the hours of thought and effort he manages to invest in the group whilst juggling his other commitments.

We should confidently expect similarly successful Scouting achievements and performance over the next 12 months at Barlaston & Tittensor Scout Group.

Paul Westwood – Group Trustee Board Chairman

**Financial Review**

The majority of the group’s income generally comes from membership fees. Additional income is generated by fundraising, including the very successful Saturday cake sale, just before Christmas each year.

Barlaston Parish Council continue to show interest in the group and this has included occasional financial assistance. The group greatly appreciate this help.

In recent years, the group benefited from two grants in relation to Covid matters and as a consequence has a healthy bank balance. However, plans are developing to improve the toilet facilities, which has been overdue for a long time. All the available funds are likely to be utilised in achieving this aim.

All the Group’s expenditure goes on providing resources to allow the key objectives and programmes to be delivered. This includes HQ membership fees, badges, neckerchiefs, craft materials, services, insurances and land & property maintenance and improvements.

**Reserves Policy**

The Group's policy on reserves is to hold sufficient resources to continue the charitable activities of the group should income and fundraising activities fall short. The Group Trustee Board considers that the group should hold a sum equivalent to 6 months running costs, circa £2,000.

The Group held reserves of approximately £2,000 against this at year end. This is the level required for operating expenses. This has been achieved largely as a result of Central and Local government grants relating to Covid pandemic lock-down measures and their associated hardships.

**Investment Policy**

The Group's Income and Expenditure is very small and as a consequence does not have sufficient funds to invest in longer-term investments such as stocks and shares. The Group has therefore adopted a low-risk strategy to the investment of its funds. All funds are held in cash using only mainstream banks or building societies or The Scout Association's Short Term Investment Service.

The Group Trustee Board regularly monitors the levels of bank balances and the interest rates received to ensure the group obtains maximum value and income from its banking arrangements. Occasionally this may involve using an account that requires a period of notice before funds may be withdrawn, before doing so the Group Trustee Board considers the cash flow requirements.

**Future Plans**

It is hoped that 2024 will see a consolidation of membership numbers.

A new Squirrels section would be a consideration for the group, however a lack of adult leaders, despite our recent recruitment drive, is likely to prevent this happening for the foreseeable future.

Improvements to the land & property, in particular the hall storage and toilets, as mentioned above, will continue alongside routine and planned maintenance.

**Declaration**

The trustees declare that they have approved the trustees’ report above

Signed on behalf of the trustees

Signed:

Full name: Paul Westwood Julia Spight

Position: Chairman Treasurer

Date: 16.02.2024 16.02.2024