



Barlaston & Tittensor Scout Group

Trustees' Annual Report

For period 01.01.2024 to 31.12.2024

Reference and Administration details

Charity name: Barlaston & Tittensor Scout Group

Registered Charity No.: 524508

Scout HQ Registration No.: 10015484

Address: The Scout Hut
Duke's Walk,
Off Station Road,
Barlaston
Staffordshire
ST12 9DQ

Charity Trustees

Chair	Paul Westwood
Treasurer	Julia Spight
GLV	Gareth Westwood
SL	Marj Jopson
CSL	Kay Royle
BSL	Gavin Statham
Parent Rep	Stefan Park (up to 24.06.2024)
Active Support	Rebecca Loughhead

Advisers

Surveyor	Paul Beardmore
Scrutineer	Leigh Whiteside

Structure, Governance and Management

The Group's governing documents are those of 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 2 independent representatives, Chair and Treasurer, together with the Group Lead Volunteer, individual section leaders (if opted to take on the responsibility) and parents' 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 Lead Volunteer 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

Beaver Scout Section

In 2024, Beaver section maintained 15 beavers throughout the year.

We have 3 leaders plus The GLV who assists when required. We have also had support from Scout and Cub leaders when we asked which was a great support from other sections.

We ran 37 sessions over the year.

We awarded 132 badges in 28 challenge badges and 1 Broze award. We have two members who earned a bronze award but who we are yet to award. 14 various activity badges were awarded.

We sadly were only able to offer 1 Night Away opportunity this year, and had 5 beavers attend.

8 Beavers attended St George's parade, 9 attended Barlaston's Remembrance parade.

Beavers also visited Wedgwood Museum, painted some potters and had a tour of Barlaston Hall and church. We also visited a variety of play parks in the village.

We are now at full capacity and any new members will have to be added to a waiting list for a probable start date in September

Gav

Cub Scout Section

This year our number of cubs has ranged from 15-19 members

We have 3 leaders: - 1x Team volunteer leader and 2 x assistant team volunteer leaders.

We have also had the help of a youth volunteer, working towards his DofE Gold award which he has now completed and passed as well as occasional help from parents.

We ran 37 sessions over the year.

There were 188 badges awarded covering a range of activities- Animal carer, Artist, Athletics, Backwoods cooking, Chef, Home help, International, Martial Arts and Scientist. Plus, Stage badges for Navigation, Emergency aid, Hikes, swimming, musician and Nights away. 37 Challenge badges and 2 Silver Chief scout awards.

Sadly, we were only able to offer 1 Night Away opportunity this year where we had 15 cubs attend. 8 Cubs attended St George's parade, 11 attended Barlaston's Remembrance parade, 10 cubs volunteered in the community at the Feed the Hungry food pack. Cubs also visited Clip & Climb and to an animal rescue centre and had a visit from a Paris Olympian. Finally, congratulations again to Ben H who was our Cub of the year at our Group summer awards event.

Kay

Scout Section

The scout troop this year has ranged between 13-18 members, with our current number at 14.

We have 6 leaders: 1 Scout Leader and 5 Assistant Scout Leaders. (Or whatever the new roles are called...)

We ran 31 weekly meetings with a handful of additional meetings for specific events, including the bake sale, parades etc.

In total we awarded 119 badges, including 3 Chief Scout Gold Awards and a number of challenge badges.

We offered two separate Nights Away Events, one of which was a one-night expedition, which 5 scouts attended and earned a badge. The other was a district event for one night which 8 scouts attended.

We have also offered many different activities during our weekly meetings, including pioneering, navigation, communication and emergency aid. We have also started work towards the 'You Shape' award, which the scouts are very enthusiastic about.

Parade attendance has been good, with 5 scouts attending the St. George's parade and 11 attending the Remembrance Parade.

Considering areas on which we could improve, it would be nice to see a greater female presence in the troop, as we lost our only Female Scout in the last year. It would also be great to offer more nights away as the scouts and leaders both enjoy these events and they provide much needed experience away from home for the young members.

Jon

Group Lead Volunteer GLV(previously Group Scout Leader GSL) report;

2024 has been another great year for scouting in Barlaston. I'm not going to go over what the section leaders have said but do want to just call a couple of things out.

Beavers has continued to retain a good number of young people with a healthy split of male and female and a consistent feed of young people up to Cubs. Gav, Kay, Amelie and Theo are putting on a great programme and keeping them entertained whilst still ticking all of the scouting boxes. Cubs has similarly had great numbers of young people and Kay ably assisted by Zoe and Rachel has kept them in line and with a consistent stream of badges. We always lose a few between Cubs and Scouts but Kay has been diligent in "moving up" with the young people to help the transition to scouts. We have a new Section leader at Scouts in Jonathan, taking over the ever so difficult to fill shoes of Marj thanks Jon for taking on the mantle. Jon has backup from Chris, Gav, Ian and Nigel and they too have kept up good numbers and an awesome programme.

Marj stood down from weekly commitments in September after 13 years at the helm of the Scout section and 14 years with the group. She has taken up a role as a group leader joining Becca and Steve to be available for events such as this evening and as emergency cover when shift patterns

leave us short. She is also my reminder in chief and does a good job of keeping me on task when I'm trying really hard to be sidetracked.

Stone District too has a new volunteer in charge, Daisy took over as District lead volunteer towards the end of the year and is working diligently with the District team to make sure all groups are compliant with all of the rules and regulations that come with an organisation this size. We welcome Daisy to the role [and thank her [and Suzanne]] for joining us tonight.

2024 was not all sunshine and roses for me. I had two periods during which I had to, through no choice of my own, take a step back from scouting. These "sabbaticals" were a result of what I can only describe as poor management choices by my line managers within scouting and whilst I am still waiting for a formal apology, I have decided to continue volunteering for an organisation that I love, in a village that has become my scouting home. I can only hope that I manage to insulate the leaders at Barlaston from as much of this poor management as possible...That's quite enough of that though...

We have also had the super exciting news that Zoe and her partner Colin are expecting a baby boy in July. Zoe is going to be taking some time out so we could do with finding another pair of hands to help at Cubs, even if only for the short term but we are all very happy and excited for them and looking forward to a new member starting in 2031... As soon as I have a name and a DOB I'll get him on the waiting list.

Talking of extra hands, we could also do with finding another leader or two for both Beavers and Scouts. Beavers are heavily dependent on the Statham family, which is fine as long as the car doesn't break down and Scouts have some challenges due to leaders working shifts, sometimes that doesn't line up so well and we are a bit short.

Final thanks go out to Paul, and Julia as Chair and Treasurer of the Group Trustees Board. Both of these guys do a huge amount of work behind the scenes making sure that the group is compliant with all manner of Scout and charity commission requirements and making sure we are getting best value from our various suppliers

At that, I shall, I'm sure you will be glad to hear, shut up and hand back to Paul, our group trustees board chair, my father and a thoroughly awesome chap.

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Gareth Westwood | 07830 128075
Group Scout Leader | Barlaston & Tittensor Scout Group

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. The kitchen has had yet another lick of paint to keep that ball rolling. The dividing wall between the hall and stores has been rebuilt, as part of our Asbestos Management Plan, in readiness for some future storage work. 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.

Under new 'Transformation' arrangements from The Scout Association, the role of secretary to the Board of Trustees no longer exists. Liz Peck had undertaken that role for use for part of 2024 and we thank her for her contribution. Thanks also to Stefan Park for his contribution to the Board of Trustees in 2024 as Parents' Representative. I hope we shall have many more years of fun and friendship together, supporting the group in other ways. 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 has embarked 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 has included a new computer system which, as anticipated, now rolled out, does inevitably have glitches to be 'accommodated' and/or worked around. It is hoped that 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 2025.

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 relatively new Chair and very new District Lead Volunteer (DLV) [previously DC].

I must also formally register, on behalf of The Trustee Board and the Group Scout Council, 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.

Gift Aid provides a relatively easy source of income, approx. £30 per member per year, so long as consent to claim is registered, which can be done on OSM. Ask a section Leader or our Treasurer if you have a question or need help.

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

During the Covid 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 2025 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
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Position:	Chairman	Treasurer
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Date:	14.02.2024	14.02.2024
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