

WARWICKSHIRE SCOUTS
MINUTES OF THE COUNTY AGM
HELD 1 OCTOBER 2022 AT 16.45 AT ARUP OFFICES

PRESENT: STEVEN AKERS, STUART BEAVER, STEVE BENNETT, MICHELLE BRIERLEY, DAVID BOOTH, ANDY CLARKE, KATRINA COLLIE, ANGELA CORKE, CHRIS COTTRELL, TIM CRONIN, MARK EARLES, JO ELSY, CAROLINE FARRELL, DOUG FAULCONBRIDGE, GILLIAN FRIAR, BRIAN FRIAR, MARC GADSBY, TONY GUY, NIGEL HAILEY, KEVIN HAYNES, STEVEN HAYNES, THOMAS HAYNES, MICHAEL HEPBURN, GAVIN HOBBS, MARTIN KELLY, WENDY KETCH, GRAHAM MALLINSON, KAREN MARSHALL, CHRISTINE MCINTOSH, CHARLOTTE MERCHANT, PAUL MERCHANT, GRAHAM OLD, MARK PAYNE, GERRY RUSSELL, SUSAN SAUNDERS, RUTH SLANEY, SAM SMITH, MARIA SMITH, BEN STEELE, JENNY STOCKBRIDGE, DAWN STRINGER, ANDY WALKER (CHAIR), PAUL WAKELEY, ANDREW WASLEM, JOSHUA WILLIAMS, BRIDGET WYNSTANLEY.

APOLOGIES: LORD-LIEUTENANT TIM COX , FIONA MITCHELL, STEPHEN CROSS, TOBY RUSSELL, MATT FRIAR, PHIL REVILL

Item 1: Welcome and apologies for absence

The Chairman opened the annual meeting of the Warwickshire Scout Council and introduced two guests; Sue Saunders Vice-Lord Lieutenant and Bridget Winstanley County Vice President.

The meeting commenced with a short film produced by HQ reviewing the past 12 months.

Apologies for absence were noted (see above).

Item 2: Minutes of previous AGM

The meeting was asked to approve the minutes of the prior AGM, held 7th October 2021; the minutes were proposed by Brian Friar, seconded by Mark Earles and approved by 100% of the meeting.

Item 3: Matters Arising

There were no matters arising.

Item 4/5/6: County Review of the Year

Chairman's Report

The Chairman thanked Nigel as CC for his continued leadership over the year, including serving a number of Districts as acting DC. He also thanked members of the executive committee for their continued support.

A particular thank you was given to Fiona Mitchell who after many years has stood down as County Secretary.

Andy reported that a highlight of the year was Get In, our County Camp, noting how the team had excelled in all sorts of ways, thousands of young enjoying a weekend to remember! The introduction of the first Squirrels Drey noted as another landmark this year.

Andy gave a massive thank you to the entire county-wide body of adult volunteers, driving scouting onwards at all levels.

On behalf of the Exec, Andy conveyed thanks to John Sharp, who has stood down after many years as County Appointments Secretary due to ill health; Jenny Stockbridge has kindly offered to take-up this appointment.

Looking forwards there are a number of organisational changes on the horizon; but it was noted that whatever challenges arose, there was confidence that everyone would continually strive towards our over-arching ambition, which is to allow Scouting to touch more and more young people and adults from every background.

County Commissioner's Report:

The CC began his report by asking the meeting to pause for a few moments, to remember the stalwarts from Warwickshire Scouts who have sadly passed away this year.

This has been a year which moved from being entirely on zoom back to more “normal” scouting, however the CC noted that Scouting will never be quite the same again, that we’ve learned a lot about using technology and whilst most sections are back meeting face to face; a blended model of Scouting will move forwards and is to be applauded, maintaining some flexibility.

Pre-Covid there had been 5460 young people enjoying scouting in Warwickshire, dropping 20% to 4422 in 2021, we bounced back to 4966 when face-to face starting began again, not quite back to where we were, but the feeling is we have continued growing. Some challenging areas, where leadership teams have stood down and we need to work to get Scouting back in those areas; but overall a good-news story. There are 820 young people on the waiting list (excl. Squirrels) which has grown each of the last 3 years, it is a big challenge to get these people into our movement so they can enjoy all we can offer. There is high demand for Squirrels (c.350 on waiting list in Jan); 2 Squirrel Dreys up and running at 3rd Warwick; with more on the way.

There has been a huge increase in number of young people earning their Queen’s Scout awards and the CC thanked Tony Marsella for his leadership in this area, there are also lots of DofE groups operating in the County, and there has been one Scout of the World awarded.

Members of the County continue to be active in the Arts, there has been the 50th Anniversary of WAGS, Gang Show 90 in London where representatives of WAGS, KEGS and Nuneaton performed, and 5 young people joined the NSGSO / NSGCB concerts over the summer.

Alfrey Activity Centre is now back up and running and has been well used this year. Looking forwards the lease expires in 2 years; a working party has been established to look options for lease renewal / site re-development.

CC noted that Get-In had been a fantastic experience; the meeting then watched a short video of the camp highlights. Thanks were given to all those who had organised, brought kids along, and otherwise supported camp, it had been a huge leap of faith to put on Get-In when the initial planning had taken place when was still very much in the pandemic, but he was so pleased we did, with 20% more people at Get-in 2022 vs 2017

Moving on to training, the CC reported courses are largely running via zoom, there has been some in-person training done but zoom appears to be the preference. The use of zoom has allowed us to help train people from the wider country and even internationally.

The biggest challenge is around mandatory training, we are in a better position than 2021, but still 135 people around the county who have out of date safety and/or safeguarding training; very important to keep our young people and adults safe. Other issues include the number of people in the County who now need to complete their first aid training and the desperate need for more training advisors

Looking forwards there are some great events coming up with a great and varied programme being offered; Explorer Night hike event coming up followed by Bear Trek and 45 young people will be going to the World Scout Jamboree in Korea next.

There are exciting transformations underway which, as they roll out over the next year or so will hopefully make peoples experience easier. As a county we will continue to work to become more inclusive reflecting our communities, we would like to grow with an aspiration to stand here next year with zero waiting list.

County Youth Commissioner's Report:

Ruth reported that the CYCs had supported Young leader training, and the roll out of the "Youth shaped" award across the County. One of the key aims has been to support/engage with the older sections, with Matt visiting a number of Explorer units. The CYCs attended basecamp#22.

5 Districts now have DYC in place with a further 2 possibly in the process of appointment.

Looking forward: there are plans to deliver a resource pack for youth-shaped scouting and improve communications on social media and County website.

Nigel noted that Ruth and Matt had made significant progress in driving for increased collaboration and engagement of the CYCs across the regions and thanked them for that.

Recognising Success:

With the aim to try and issue awards out as soon as they arrive there were not so many awards to hand out at the AGM; Nigel presented Wood Badges to Yvonne Paige Stimpson – DC & Ruth Slaney - CYC

Nigel ended by thanking the important people who work week in week out with the young people, and to Districts who support that.

Item 7: County Treasurers Report

As Phil Revill had given his apologies, the Chair read out a pre-prepared report of the finances. Those present were given a copy of the accounts as submitted to the Charity Commission, key highlights:

Total income was £272,000, £55,000 higher than the previous year.

To support groups during the lockdowns the County Executive had decided to levy a reduced Capitation fee of 18,000 for the year, however as many of our costs continued expenditure was £24,000, some £6,000 greater than the Capitation fees received.

Due to COVID impacts at the start of the year Alfrey Activity Centre income was around one third of the pre COVID levels; maintenance and preparation costs for re-opening the centre continued throughout the year leading to a deficit of some £12,000.

WAGS found a way through the challenges of lockdown and was able to put on another great show. A surplus of £4,000 was made thereby recovering the deficit made in the previous year.

County is reporting a deficit of £14,000 for 2021/22, which will reduce general reserves by the same amount; no changes to designated reserves are proposed.

The meeting raised a question about the reserves policy, AW answered that one of the long-term challenges is to get this down, that the Exec understand the challenges and year-on-year we budget for a deficit to reduce the reserve. The CC explained some of the general reserve is related to Alfrey Activity Centre for repairs and that whilst the lease is under-review this is being held rather than spent.

The meeting was invited to approve the accounts which were proposed by David Booth, seconded by Jenny Stockbridge and accepted unanimously by the meeting.

Item 8: Election of Officers and Executive Committee

County Chairman: The CC took over the chair of the meeting and nominated Andy Walker, who has agreed to continue to stand as County Chairman; the CC welcomed Andy back and he resumed the Chair.

County Treasurer: Phil Revill has agreed to continue as County Treasurer; there were no other nominations; Phil's appointment was proposed by Brian Friar, seconded by Douglas Faulconbridge and unanimously approved by the meeting.

County Secretary: Michelle Brierley has offered to stand for the vacant role of County Secretary; there were no other nominations; Michelle's appointment was proposed by Tony Guy, seconded by Holly Barnes and unanimously approved by the meeting.

Nominated Executive Committee Members

Atherstone & Nuneaton - Steven Wright

Leamington - Brian Friar

Kenilworth - Mark Earles

Rugby - David Colledge

Stratford - Tony Guy

Warwick - Vacant

West Warwickshire – Mike Dean

Youth Representative - Vacant

Matt Friar and Ruth Slaney are ex officio members of the Executive in the capacity of County Youth Commissioner using one of the elected Youth Reps places.

These were proposed on block by Gillian Fryer, seconded by Katrina Collie and unanimously accepted by the meeting

County Commissioner's Nominations:

Stephen Cross

DCC Training - Katrina Collie

DCC Programme - Paul Wakeley

Alfrey Activity Centre Manager - Paul Skipper

County Media Manager - Paul Blackmore.

The CC's nominations were proposed on block Jenny Stockbridge, seconded by Mark Earles and unanimously accepted by the meeting.

Item 9: Appointment of Independent Examiner

Mark Harwood & Co of Warwick was appointed to continue as the independent examiner; proposed by Brian Friar, seconded by Graham Old and unanimously accepted by the meeting

Item 10: Vice-Lord Lieutenant, Susan Saunders

Susan Saunders took to the floor and passed on the apologies of Tim Cox who was unable to attend. Susan then told the meeting that having visited Get In she was pleased to be present today to say how impressed she had been with the camp; all the young people had been completely absorbed, were focussed and enjoying themselves, the atmosphere was great, the quality of organisation apparent and could see that the dedication of all volunteers paid off. It had been an inspirational experience for her and she was now spreading the word of the importance and value of Scouting to wider community. She noted that she was aware that it is not just the big events that make the difference but also the time given on a weekly basis; motivating, providing role models, and passed on her thanks on behalf of the Lieutenancy for all work done through County.

Item 11: Chairmans closing remarks

The Chairman thanked everyone for attending the AGM and the earlier County Day, the meeting closed 17:37.