

1st Sandwell Scout Group

Annual General Meeting

**Presentation of Year End Accounts to 31st December 2024,
Trustee and Section Reports**

1st Sandwell Scout HQ

7th May 2025

AGENDA

- 1 Introduction and welcome**
- 2 Apologies for absence**
- 3 Governance topics**
 - 3.1 Approve the minutes of the 2024 Annual General Meeting**
 - 3.2 Reaffirm the adoption of the model constitution from, Policy Organisation and Rules (POR) <https://www.scouts.org.uk/por/5-local-governance-and-finance-of-groups-districts-counties/#5>**
 - 3.3 Note the Group's financial year**
 - 3.4 Agree the number of members that may be appointed to the Trustee Board**
 - 3.5 Agree the quorum for future meetings of the Group Scout Council (excluding this AGM)**
- 4 Review of the previous year Trustee's Report**
 - 4.1 Receive and consider the Annual Report of the Group Trustee Board, including the annual Statement of the Accounts**
 - 4.2 The Group Lead Volunteer's review of Scouting in the 1st Sandwell Scout Group**
 - 4.3 Section reports**
- 5 Making appointments**
 - 5.1 Appointments to the Group Trustee Board.**
- 6 Closing remarks & AOB**

Item 3.1

Approve the Minutes of the 2024 Annual General Meeting

Minutes of the 2024 Annual General Meeting

1st Sandwell Scout Group

Annual General Meeting

25th June 2024

Present: Brigitte Hatfield (Secretary), Chris Jones (GSL), Alan Dean (Treasurer), Toby Hatfield (Sectional Assistant), Vanessa Hitchon (Chairman), Ben Hatfield (Section Leader), Lewis Tucker (Section Leader), Graham Jones (Exec Member), James Potter (Exec Member), Reece Williams (Assistant Section Leader), Kim Morgan (Assistant Section Leader), Adam Morgan (Assistant Section Leader), Carol Payton (Section Leader), Jason Cross (Assistant Section Leader), Nicola Dean (Section Leader), and parents / carers of young people from the group.

Apologies: Adastra Fletcher (Sectional Assistant), Pam Samra (Group Communication Lead), Mark Green (part of the meeting), Nicola Johnson (District Commissioner)

1 Welcome

A welcome was extended to all leaders, parents and young people in attendance and apologies recorded.

2 Minutes of Last Meeting

It was proposed by the chair that these be taken as a true record. Lewis Tucker proposed they be accepted as read and Ben Hatfield seconded.

3 Section Reports

These were taken as read and accepted as a true record. Ben Hatfield proposed that the section reports be accepted as a true record. Lewis Tucker seconded. The charity's financial year is 1st January – 31st December. The section reports will be published on the website for all to read in detail and a letter emailed to all parents with a link to them.

4 Governance Matters

The following matters relate to the change to the constitution of the governance of the group – we will change from an Executive Committee to a Trustee Board, and we are therefore obliged to formally adopt a model constitution and other matters.

5 Adopting the POR model constitution

In line with the recommendation from Scout Headquarters, the Group Trustee Board proposes that we formally adopt the model constitution from Chapter 5 of Policy, Organisation and Rules. A copy of this was available for review and inspection prior to this meeting and copies are available at this

meeting for you to peruse should you wish this evening. Lewis Tucker seconded the motion. The Group Scout Council approved by a show of hands.

6 Noting the Group's Financial Year

- a. **The Chair asked that the Group Scout Council note that the charity's financial year runs from 1st January to 31st December.**

7 Approval of appointed and community members of the Group Scout Council

The Chair noted that those present i.e. the parents and carers of the young people, constituted the Group Scout Council and there were no additional nominations as Group Scout Council Members.

8 Number of members on the Trustee Board

The Chair noted that good practice suggests that a Trustee Board should have a minimum of 5 and a maximum of 12 Trustees in total (including ex officio and co-opted Trustees). The Group Scout Council must agree to the number of people to be appointed to our Trustee Board. The outgoing Trustee Board recommends that we appoint 8 people and the Chair proposed that the Council approved this recommendation. Ben Hatfield seconded the motion.

7 Group Scout Council Quorum

It was suggested that we set a minimum of 10 people as the quorum for Group Scout Council meetings. Lewis Tucker seconded the motion.

8 Group Lead Volunteer report

The Group Lead Volunteer then read the following to the council:

Hopefully you have seen the reports and had chance to read them. As you will see, there is plenty going on and we are continuing to deliver good quality scouting. Later on, in the video, you will be able to see this in action.

Many top awards have been earned along with many activity badges. The amount of activities and outings make you feel exhausted just reading about them. All of this is because we have excellent leadership teams. Those leadership teams are shrinking though. There is never a lack of new recruits to the young people in each section, but volunteers to lead the in those sections are sadly lacking.

I joined this group in 1962; I was in the guides at the time but it looked like the Scouts were having more fun and adventure and they needed help. 62 years later and they still need help! (please don't try to do the maths, just accept that I am old!)

Most of our current leaders have been here as young people and leaders for many years. They deserve to have more support. The Beaver section and Cub section in particular are desperate. They will struggle to continue without more volunteers (we have to have a specific number to ensure the correct ratio of leaders to young people for safety reasons). Nicola has come back to run the Cub Scout pack after a few years' break. She now brings her son Harry with her who is a young leader in Redditch where they live and for this we are grateful. Harry is an experienced Scout and we couldn't do without him. However, you can see the distances that some of our leaders are travelling to support your young people.

The saying goes, “If you want something doing, ask a busy person”. Well I am asking you, or maybe you know of someone who would be interested in a leadership role.

We have some challenges ahead, there are changes to come in our organisation, affecting our training and our titles. We have the needs of an ageing building, we need more storage for camping equipment, the land needs improving and maintaining and our biggest challenge of is the potential loss of our top car park due to the sale of the church.

We have a vacancy to fill on our Trustee Board as Jim Potter who has served for several years is stepping down due to work commitments. We would like to build a team of volunteers to help with maintenance of the land and building on a regular basis, perhaps once a month or bi-monthly on a Saturday morning. Also, someone who would dedicate their time to applying for possible grants would be a tremendous help. Anyone who feels that they might be interested to help us in any of these capacities, please come and speak with me or the Trustee Board Chair after the meeting.

Despite all of these trials and tribulations, we continue as Scouts do, keeping to their promise, always doing their best.

Your children are a pleasure and a joy....most of the time! And give us lots to smile and laugh about. I can honestly say that 99.9% of them are well behaved, again most of the time so well done to you, their parents. You have done a brilliant job. My only request to you to make life even better, is that you teach them to wash up and clear away their own things!

We have several leaders who are leaving us at the end of the summer; Addy is going to Cumbria to do her Masters degree, Kiran is going to Bristol on placement and Raj comes only when his University work permits. Matt Burns left us due to work commitments, but we hope that he will return when the travelling time improves. Our grateful thanks to all of them.

Of course, as always, our Group would not exist without the enthusiasm and dedication of the leaders and trustees. They are the best. We may not have quantity, but we have quality. My grateful thanks to all of them.”

Christine Jones
Group Lead Volunteer

9 Treasurer’s Report

The Chair noted that the Trustee Board had approved the Annual Report and Statement of Accounts and asked the Treasure to give an explanation of the accounts to the Council.

The Treasurer commented on the statement of accounts. Income was slightly higher this year and expenses also slightly higher – therefore we have effectively stayed static. We have to maintain a reserve to ensure that if everything goes wrong, we have the funds to continue running for a couple of years. We had quite a few donations coming in and all of these do help. A call was made asking for anyone who knows how to apply for grants to support the building work that is required.

There were no comments or questions raised on the Treasurer’s report.

10 Election of Chair & Trustees

The Chair handed over the meeting to the group Lead Volunteer who explained the following: Following a change of name from the Group Executive to Group Trustee Board, all Trustees now have a term of office for up to a maximum of three years after which time they must stand down or be nominated for reappointment. Therefore existing 'executive' members will commence a 3 year term from this AGM should they wish to continue to stand. There is an open selection process for new members that is run by the Trustee Board and will consist of advertising for nominations. This will allow for self-nomination as well as other people who would be a great addition to the Board. The process for selecting new Trustees will commence should any of the existing Trustees indicate that they intend to leave the Board or when their 3 year term of office is coming to an end.

The recommendation to the Group Scout Council is that Vanessa Hitchon should continue as Group Chair. The Council approved this by show of hands and the meeting was passed back to Vanessa to continue.

The current trustees are Alan Dean, Brigitte Hatfield, Vanessa Hitchon, Chris Jones, Mark Green, Graham Jones and Lewis Tucker. The Chair asked that we approve the appointment of most these for the next 3 years. Sadly, we do have a vacancy to fill as Jim Potter has decided that he needs to take a break to focus on other activity. A small presentation was made to Jim in recognition of his efforts.

Ben Hatfield proposed the remaining trustees be appointed en bloc. The Group Scout Council approved by a show of hands.

11 AOB

Presentations to the following were made or acknowledged:

Noah Brown - Chief Scout Bronze Award

Vilislav Karakolev - Chief Scout Bronze Award

Adastra Fletcher – Wood badge

Chief Scout 20 years award – Adam Paul Morgan

Chief Scout 10 years award – Lewis Tucker and Benjamin Hatfield

Chief Scout 5 years award – Vanessa Michelle Hitchon and James Robert Potter

A video was played to the group by Adam Morgan (with the help of the Scouts) showing some of the activities that the sections had taken part in over the course of the last 12 months.

The Explorers then did a presentation on their charity 'Scouts Against Malaria'.

Presentation of various badges were made to the Explorer Scouts.

End of the minutes of June 2024 meeting

Item 4.1 **Trustee's Report for year ending 31st December 2024**

Governing Documents

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. <https://www.scouts.org.uk/por/5-local-governance-and-finance-of-groups-districts-counties/#5>

Policies

This Group Trustee Board exists to make sure the charity is well-managed, risks are assessed and mitigated, buildings and equipment are in good working order, and everyone follows legal requirements and the organisation's policies and rules. Their support helps other volunteers run high-quality and safe programmes that gives young people skills for life. The Scout Group 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.

Purpose

The trustee Board is a team of volunteers who work together, as charity trustees, to make sure local Scouting is run safely and legally. At the heart of their role is a focus on strategy, performance and assurance.

Principle Activities

The purpose of the Charity is the provision of Scouting for young people of all ages plus adults.

Public Benefit

The trustees have referred to the guidance contained in the Charity Commissions General Guidance on public benefit when reviewing the charitable aims and objectives and in planning future activities. The trustees have considered how planned activities will contribute to the aims and objectives set.

Risk Management

All major risks have been identified and have procedures in place. Risks are reviewed periodically. There is an annual review of the level of funding that is necessary to cover potential risks.

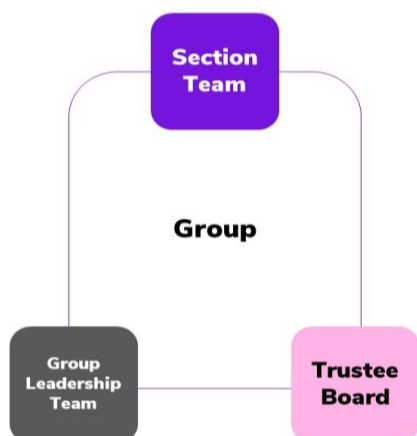
Trustees

Chair	V Hitchon	Elected until 2027
Treasurer	A Dean	Elected until 2027
Group Lead Volunteer	C Jones	Ex-officio
Trustee	B Hatfield	Elected until 2027
Trustee	M Green	Elected until 2027
Trustee	G Jones	Elected until 2027
Trustee	M Green	Elected until 2027
Trustee	L Tucker	Elected until 2027
Trustee	Ben Hatfield	Co-opted until 2025

Group Operational Structure

The Group consists of three section teams, Beavers, Cubs and Scouts, the Earhart Explorer Unit is a Sandwell District Unit that is attached to the 1st Sandwell Group under a partnership agreement and operates as a Section Team alongside other Section Teams. The other two teams are the Trustee Board, their remit is to ensure that the group operates legally and safely and the Group Leadership Team, which carries out the operational side of the group's activities in relation to the building, land, recruitment, training etc.

Organisational structure



Financial Review and developments

1st Sandwell Scout Group is a registered charity, with all its income derived from; charitable donations, gift aid reclaimed from HM Revenue and Customs, fundraising and membership subscriptions. There are no paid officers, and all leaders and supporters provide their services on a voluntary basis.

The trustees considers that the Group should hold a minimum sum equivalent to 12 months running costs. A reserve fund of £8,000 is in place to cover these potential costs.

Charity law requires the trustees to prepare financial statements for each financial year that provide a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the Charity and of the surplus or deficit of the Charity for that period. In preparing the financial statements the trustees have: -

- selected suitable accounting policies and then applied them consistently;
- made judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- declared and explained any material departures in the financial statements; and
- prepared the financial statements on the going concern basis.

The trustees have overall responsibility for ensuring that the Charity has appropriate systems of controls, financial or otherwise. They are also responsible for keeping proper accounting records which disclose, with reasonable accuracy, at any time the financial position of the Charity. The trustees are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the Charity and taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

The trustees have funding for the current year (2025) which will allow the Charity to maintain their current activities.

The Scout Group owns the building with the land being owned by Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council and leased to the Group, these are held on trust. The group is responsible for all maintenance and running costs associated with the building and the land.

The group is responsible for all costs associated with providing Scouting to its members. In addition, the Group pays an annual subscription to the National Scout Association based on the number of members in the Group, along with amounts to Sandwell Scout District and West Mercia Scout County, currently in January 2025 this is £52.50 per member at a cost of £2,835.

The National Scout Annual Census takes place in January each year. In January 2024 we recorded 51 young people plus nine explorers, and in January 2025 48 young people plus six explorers, showing that the group has shrunk in 2024.

Accounts for the period January-December 2024 are provided in the form of a balance sheet appended to this report. For the year 2024 we are showing an operating loss of -£3,423. compared with an operating income over expenditure of £2,115 in the 2023 accounts. The 2024 amount includes a capital expenditure of £2,085 for enabling work to allow the equipment stores to be housed in a more accessible location, and a further £830 that was paid to Children in need, carried forward from the 2023 accounts. The capital expenditure has been taken from our Instant Access account, a sum of money we hold for major building refurbishment expenditure. This still leaves us with an operating deficit of -£508 for the year.

We are looking at additional funding to allow the group to continue to flourish and have started on a refurbishment programme for the HQ building, which we hope to progress this year.

Exceptional Events

As most will now be aware, we no longer have access to the carpark off Hamstead Road, all access to the site is via Marston Grove. We hope to have access to the additional land, that is adjacent to the main gates at the entrance to the site from Marston Grove, we plan for this to be used partly as an additional drop off and pick up area.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all leaders, parents of members who have provided support to the Group and to ask for your continued support. Scouting at this level is only possible because of the time and effort provided by leaders and supporters of the Group. I would also like to take this opportunity to thank Trustees for all their time and efforts over the last 12 months.

V Hitchon

Chair of the Trustee Board.

1st Sandwell Scout Group Accounts January-December 2024

INCOME

	2024	2023
Bank Interest	£ 364	£ 266
Distributed Funds	£ 100	£ -
Donation	£ 2,507	£ 2,354
Events	£ -	£ 878
Events - Beavers	£ 378	£ 1,270
Events - Cubs	£ 1,256	£ 1,006
Events - Explorers	£ 150	£ 995
Events - Scouts	£ 948	£ 57
Events Group	£ 3,422	£ 1,859
Fundraising	£ 250	£ -
Gift Aid	£ 2,081	£ 2,542
Membership Fees	£ 10,005	£ 11,645
Sales	£ 365	£ 115
Total Income	£ 21,827	£ 22,987

EXPENDITURE

2024	2023	
£ 346	£ 375	Activity Equipment
£ 367	£ 500	Admin
£ 898	£ 823	Badges
£ -	£ 16	Camping Equipment
£ 1,035	£ 1,000	Cleaning
£ 930	£ -	Distributed Funds
£ -	£ 63	Events
£ 210	£ 1,108	Events - Beavers
£ 1,290	£ 151	Events - Cubs
£ -	£ 3	Events - Explorers
£ 959	£ 621	Events - Scouts
£ 3,378	£ 4,052	Events Group
£ 2,284	£ 2,039	Insurance
£ -	£ 950	Leader Donation
£ -	£ 84	Meetings
£ 338	£ 300	Meetings - Beavers
£ 279	£ 200	Meetings - Cubs
£ 166	£ 225	Meetings - Explorers
£ 159	£ 101	Meetings - Scouts
£ 3,380	£ 2,970	Membership Costs
£ 591	£ 629	OSM Charges
£ 1,871	£ -	Rates
£ 20	£ 20	Rent
£ 2,085	£ -	Stores Project
£ 560	£ -	Training
£ 2,546	£ 2,092	Utilities
£ 789	£ 1,828	Venue Maintenance
£ 290	£ 351	Waste collection
£ 479	£ 327	Wifi and telephone
£ 25,250	£ 20,827	

Note

2023 accounts had incorrect
figurers:
These historic accounting errors
have been been corrected
in these accounts

Incorrect 2023

£ 4,729	1st Sandwell Main Account	£ 4,481	£ 4,771
£ 19,355	1st Sandwell Instant Access	£ 16,296	£ 19,350
£ 889	Petty Cash	£ 2	£ 889
£ 3	Expense Account	£ 811	£ 3
£ 8,000	Reserve Account	£ 8,000	£ 8,000
£ 32,977	Total account balance	£ 29,590	£ 33,013

Summary			
Opening Balance	£ 33,013	£ 30,853	
Total income	£ 21,827	£ 22,987	
Total expenditure	£ 25,250	£ 20,827	
Closing Balance	£ 29,590	£ 33,013	

Signed Treasurer



1st March 2025

Signed Chair



1st March 2025

<http://www.1st-sandwell-scout-group.org/wp-content/uploads/Annual-Report-and-Accounts-2024.pdf>

Notes to the accounts for 2024

- 1 There are accounting errors that had been carried forward from 2023 when the new accounts package was first used. These have now been identified and corrected. The comparison with the published figures in the 2023 accounts is shown in the note to the left in the above 2024 balance sheet. These revised figures have been accepted by the scrutineer.
- 2 The reduction in income is mainly due to a reduced membership and corresponding reduction in income from membership subscriptions.
- 3 Events for all sections are broadly a neutral cost to the group as all events are self-funding.
- 4 Gift Aid claim from HMRC, this is lower, again due to lower membership numbers.
- 5 Bank interest is slightly higher but is expected to fall during 2025.
- 6 Group building insurance increases by about 6% year on year.
- 7 Membership costs (what we pay out for National and local Scout support, member insurance etc.) rises by about 6% year-on-year
- 8 Utility costs, mainly electricity, are rising year-on-year by about 8%.

Scrutineer's Report to the Trustees of 1st Sandwell Scout Group

I hereby report on the annual accounts of the Group for the year ended 31st December 2024.

1.1.1 Suitability for scrutineering

I am the former treasurer and, at a later date, the scrutineer for the charity and Scout Active Support Unit, the Scout and Guide Graduate Association. In addition, I am currently the Group Treasurer for 1st Astwood Bank Scout Group.

1.1.2 Respective responsibilities of Trustees and Scrutineer

As the Group's trustees you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts; you consider that neither the audit nor independent examination requirements of the Charities Act 2011 apply. It is my responsibility without carrying out an audit or independent examination to scrutinise the accounts and to report to you.

1.1.3 Basis of Scrutineer's Statement

In accordance with the directions given in the Group's constitution, I have scrutinised the records and the accounts of the Scout Group.

1.1.4 Scrutineer's Statement

In my opinion, the accounts are in accordance with the records produced to me and comply with the constitution.

Signed:



Dr Jonathan Watkins
7 Magpie Walk, Droitwich Spa, Worcestershire WR9 7FQ

Date: 27th February 2025

Item 4.3

Section Reports

Beaver Scout Section Report.

May 2024 / April 2025

We still have low numbers in the colony (13) and although we currently draw from a number of schools which should help with recruitment, we do not seem to be able to increase our numbers. However, with the shortage of leaders in the Colony, it is a delicate balancing act of numbers versus adults so another adult volunteer in the colony would ease that pressure enormously.

Awards wise, we continue to push on with the challenge awards with every challenge award being awarded over the year. Throughout the year we have awarded a wide range of activity badges: builder, cook, health & fitness, hobbies, money skills, safety, disability awareness, musician, navigator and swimmer badges as well as Beavers adding to their Nights Away and Hikes badges.

A very well done to Vili, Noah, James and Isaac on earning their Chief Scouts Bronze Awards, the top award in Beavers - this award is not easy and requires a great deal of determination and hard work. So, a big B R A V O to you all.

We continue to try to offer a varied weekly programme with games, crafts and activities, and try to make the most of the outdoors and get out as often as we can. Over the year we have enjoyed visits to Sutton Park, the Fire Station and Think Tank and have been visited by Kevin's community Circus for an evening of circus skills. The Beavers love to cook and we have tried our hand at baking, ice-cream making as well as pizzas and fruit skewers. Other big hits with the Beavers are the annual water night and our parent's night where you can come along and enjoy a night of fun and games with us.

The Beavers have also enjoyed colony sleepovers at the hut and at Twycross Zoo where we slept next to the beautiful snow leopards.

Scouting is all about the wider Scouting family, and this year the Beavers have been able to join our older sections for our group Halloween Party, JOTI, Blackwell Adventure and Beaudesert. We have also met up with Beavers from around the district and have taken part in the district sports day, enjoyed a visit to InflataNation and took part in the district Experiment Badge Day. We are now eagerly looking forward to our next sleepovers at Hoo Zoo and Dinosaur World in June and at Blackwell Adventure in August and another District Badge Day later this year.

This year the colony said our Goodbyes to Vera who has moved to the Cub Section – We miss you Vera. Thank you for all your help, we hope you enjoy Cubs.

Thanks also to the Cub and Scout teams for providing extra leaders when necessary and allowing us to join you on so many occasions.

And.....Huge thanks as always to Reece for his continued support.

We look forward to the year ahead and to continued fun and friendships.....

Carol Payton.

Team Leader Beaver Scouts.

Cub Scout Section Report

2024/2025

What a year it has been! We now have a total of 28 young people who join us regularly and we are looking forward to welcoming 3 Beavers into the pack over the next few months.

Since the last AGM, the Cubs have taken part in a variety of activities. Back in May 2024, the Cubs enjoyed a sleepover at the hut where they completed elements of their Outdoor Challenge including a hike to Sandwell Valley and a go on the High Ropes. We were blessed with lovely weather, and we had a great weekend. We then headed off to Twycross Zoo, along with the Beavers and the rest of Sandwell District. It was quite surreal waking up to the snow leopards watching us!

During the summer holidays we visited Sutton Park and found elephants! It was a very hot day but the Cubs excelled themselves and definitely earned their Hikes Away & Navigator Badges. We also met with the Beavers during the holidays to complete our Chef Badge - they do love a bit of cooking. We then took part in our annual day trip to Blackwell Adventure and we were so proud of the Cubs - they gave everything a good go and many achieved their Adventure Challenge. Again, we were lucky with the weather.

We were not quite so lucky with the weather when we went to Rhydd Covert in November - in fact Storm Bert visited us. This did not deter us though and we had a lovely festive weekend in a toasty warm building (it even had under floor heating!). We shall be off there again this year.

The Cubs have also been busy working on their badges and awards; Emergency Aid, Communicator, Pioneer, Backwoods Cooking, International and of course Nights Away. We have just finished our Scientist Badge when we made and launched rockets and most of them worked! We have had an Outdoor Skills Day at Beaudebert with the rest of the group and joined the Beavers for a trip to Thinktank during the Easter holidays.

Three Cubs have achieved their Chief Scout Silver Award since the last AGM and we are very proud of them. Well done to Ethan, Thierry and Noah W. This is the highest award a Cub can achieve, and it is our aim that every Cub will have the opportunity to achieve this award during their time with us.

Going forward, we are planning a trip to Hoo Zoo, a sleepover at Blackwell Adventure and a weekend at Rhydd Covert.

I would like to say a big thank you to all the leaders for all their hard work and support. I could not do this without Toby, Vera & Harry. They help with the planning and turn up every week to support the Cubs. A big thank you also to Marissa & Sheoli who are our Young Leaders. They are an asset to our team, and we would be lost without them. They work very hard despite being involved in numerous other activities along with their studies. And finally, a huge thank you to our parents - your support is always appreciated.

Nicola Dean

Team Leader Cub Scouts

Over the past year, the 1st Sandwell Scout Troop has had another action-packed and rewarding programme, full of opportunities for young people to learn new skills, take on exciting challenges, and enjoy the great outdoors. Our troop currently numbers 13 young people and 4 leaders, with plenty of room for growth, so don't forget to spread the word to friends and family members that new Scouts are always welcome. Below is just a small sample of what we have been up to in the last year.

Beaundesert Camp

A highlight of the year was undoubtedly our weekend camp at Beaundesert Activity Centre back in October. Scouts took part in a variety of adventurous activities including air rifle shooting and a hike through Cannock Chase. The camp was a brilliant opportunity for Scouts to build friendships, gain independence, and put their Scouting skills into practice. Even the traditional British weather couldn't dampen the spirits, and the memories made around the campfire will be long remembered!

Badges and Awards

Throughout the year, our programme has focused on helping Scouts complete as many badges and awards as possible, including:

The **Skills Challenge Award**, which required Scouts to take on activities related to problem solving, healthy eating and domestic skills such as ironing their own uniforms. Testing out their knots and lashings with their work on the **Pioneering Activity Badge**, including building scale models of see-saws, with the aim of building a full-sized one this summer (watch this space).

Exploring the wonders of science through the **Scientist Activity Badge**, including designing parachutes and writing secret messages in invisible ink.

Everything Else

In addition to working on a variety of the Scout Association's badges and awards, we always like to make time for fun and games and this year has been no exception, with the Scouts participating in traditional Wide Games, making mince pies over campfires, taking part in our own Olympics to celebrate the Games in Paris and even a pub quiz (with non-alcoholic mocktails of course).

Looking Ahead

We are proud of everything our Scouts have achieved this year and look forward to the next 12 months with lots more activities, new experiences, and personal growth ahead. Thank you to all the volunteers, parents, and supporters who make our programme possible.

Yours in Scouting,

1st Sandwell Scouts Leadership Team

Over the last 12 months, the Explorer Scout Unit has seen both growth and change. We currently have six Explorers in the section – four girls and two boys – compared to four members at this time last year. While this is a positive step forward, we recognise that a larger membership base would allow us to deliver a broader and more engaging programme. Increasing recruitment remains a priority for the coming year.

In May 2025, we bid farewell to Ryan, our eldest Explorer. Ryan's journey with Scouting began when he joined Beavers at the age of six. He remained an active member throughout every section, finishing his time in the movement on his 18th birthday. We wish Ryan well in his next chapter.

The section is proud to have two Young Leaders currently volunteering in the Cub section. Their ongoing support and leadership are valuable assets to both the Cubs and our wider group.

All Explorers are actively working toward their Chief Scout Awards. A special congratulations goes to Marissa, who has become the first Explorer to earn the Chief Scout Platinum Award since the unit was restarted in 2018. This is a significant achievement and a testament to her hard work and dedication.

Marissa and Arashdeep are also undertaking their Duke of Edinburgh Gold Award with an Open Group based in Merry Hill. We are now working towards becoming a Duke of Edinburgh Centre ourselves, which will allow us to offer the full award programme in-house in the future.

Unfortunately, we were not able to run as many camps this year as we had hoped. Challenges with leader availability and low expression of interest due to Explorers' prior commitments were the primary reasons. Looking ahead, we aim to increase our camping opportunities – including running more joint events with the Scout section and other Explorer Units.

As always, we would like to extend our thanks to the leaders, trustees, and parents who continue to support the section. Your time and commitment make everything we do possible.

We look forward to another year of development, growth, and adventure for our Explorers.

Lewis

Explorer Scout Leader