

Annual Review 2025-26



Welcome

What a fantastic and challenging year it has been for the more than 12,000 members of West Sussex Scouts! Yet another year of growth (2%: the best in the South East of England) with more young people enjoying Scouting in the County with over 9,000 young people supported by over 3,000 adult volunteers. Scouting remains the largest co-educational youth organisation in West Sussex, the UK and the world.

It was the year which saw significant changes to the senior leadership of the County. Tom Dalton stood down as County Lead Volunteer (CLV) in May 2025, and we were grateful to Matt Pike who took up the reins as acting CLV until December 2025, at which point, Joe Rogerson (previously CLV Surrey) took on the role. In addition, Tim Wright gave good notice of his intention to stand down as County Chair but continued as acting chair until Tim Taylor took over in November 2025.

It was also the year which saw significant changes to the structure of Scouting, the recruitment, welcoming and recording of adult volunteers, the training programme for leaders and the administration that supports a lot of our activities. The changes introduced by Scout Headquarters were under-pinned by a new digital system which in hindsight was sadly not fit for purpose when it was introduced. We recognise the tremendous amount of frustration that the failures of the new system have caused for our adult volunteers, especially those in Group, District and County lead volunteer roles. The time and energy many have committed to try and support the new system has been fantastic and far beyond what could have been reasonably expected. The failings in the system are being corrected constantly, and work continues to provide the IT support that our leaders deserve.

Nowhere was that enthusiasm better demonstrated than at WSIJ in August 2025 when over 3000 Scouts and Guides from West Sussex and elsewhere, together with their leaders, came together at the South of England Showground for our historic Jamboree where young people took part in over 200 activities.

The values, programmes and achievements of West Sussex Scouting are valued and recognised by the Community. The County has been actively supported by all the leading members of the Community, including the Lieutenancy, the High Sherriff and the Mayors and Chairs of all our local authorities. That support and recognition would not be there if West Sussex Scouting were not delivering a truly outstanding, respected and valued programme. That achievement, despite all the challenges of change that we have faced in the reporting year, is a tribute to the quality and commitment of those adults and Young Leaders who can say with pride that they are members of West Sussex Scouts. It is a privilege to be able to thank them.

County Chair

June – November 2025

I am pleased to report that despite a number of changes and challenges in the past year, West Sussex Scouts is in excellent shape. During the year I stepped down as Chair in the knowledge that our new Chair, Tim Taylor, would bring with him a huge amount of scouting experience and vigour and this is already bearing fruit. Likewise, the appointment of Joe Rogerson as County Lead Volunteer, another highly experienced Leader, who has been commendably quick to reach out to Districts and the wider County Management Team. I know that Joe will be a tremendous force for good within the County.

Phoebe Woolard's tenure as County Youth Lead came to an end and I would like to thank her for the lengthy and very valuable contribution she made as a Trustee, and we welcome Tom Rasmusen to the Board as the new County Youth Lead. Sadly, for us Miles Price stepped down from the Board due to family and work commitments but remains an active and hugely important County Leader.

In an effort to streamline operations and to recognise recent changes in working practices, we closed the County Office at Lodge Hill in December 2025. I would like to thank our administration team of Aby, Sue and Steve for being instrumental to bringing about this change and for all their hard work and help throughout the year.

So I can now say unequivocally that West Sussex County Scouts has a very strong and progressive Board that will work with the Districts to ensure that the County goes from strength to strength.

Tim Wright

County Chair (April– November 2025)

December 2025 onwards

As I only took up the role of County Chair in December 2025, this reporting period has been relatively short. However, the start of my term coincided with the significant challenge to all Trustees, presented by the Charity Commission's regulatory advice note following the Prevention of Future Deaths review.

This experience of promoting the message and collating responses reinforced the importance of strong governance, clear accountability, and effective communication throughout the County. As a result, we have begun placing greater emphasis on providing clarity of expectation through well-defined policies, procedures, and decision-making frameworks. Our aim is to ensure that trustees and volunteers understand not only their responsibilities but also how they contribute to the wider objectives of Scouting in West Sussex.

Alongside this, we have started to strengthen our approach to financial governance and performance measurement. By establishing clearer budgets, improving oversight, and measuring compliance against defined and measurable actions, we can better demonstrate that our resources are being used effectively and responsibly.

Looking ahead, my priority is to continue building a culture of transparency, accountability, and continuous improvement. By maximising the impact of County funds and maintaining a strong focus on governance, we can better support our Groups and Districts and ensure that Scouting across West Sussex continues to deliver outstanding opportunities for young people.

Tim Taylor

County Chair (December 2025 onwards)

County Lead Volunteer

April-December 2025

It has been a whirlwind seven months, but a great pleasure, for me to have been the West Sussex County Lead. I have enjoyed every minute, being the person at the helm, touring the districts, attending events and presentations, congratulating our young people and saying the biggest thank you to our adult volunteers.

It has been a year of change with the transition to our new ways of working, but Scouting has still remained strong in the County. We have had many successes this year:

- Young people achieving the top awards in their sections and an outstanding number of King's Scout Awards.
- The Biggest Go Beavers ever!!
- The successful return of West Sussex International Jamboree in the summer with it set to continue in the future.
- Our young people and adult volunteers attending the Moot in Portugal and the start of the WSJ 2027 jamboree unit shows that we are taking part in international scouting so really being a part of the worldwide family of Scouts.

As I pass the baton over to Joe Rogerson in January as our new County Lead, I want to thank everyone for everything they do for Scouting in West Sussex. You make sure our young people get the very best out of their journey learning new skills for life. It makes me proud that Scouting in West Sussex is so strong!

Matt Pike

County Lead Volunteer (April-December 2025)

January 2026 Onwards

Julia Kielstra and I were given the honour of taking over from Matt Pike, as Deputy County Lead and County Lead respectively, on 1st January 2026. It was a privilege to meet so many people from the County during the first three months of our tenure, and to be welcomed by everyone.

Those first three months were primarily spent focussing on how the County infrastructure should support our Scouting: creating teams; appointing scouters to new roles; getting to know the way things work; and proposing a vision for West Sussex Scouts, which we can all share in a spirit of solidarity (since "Sussex wunt be druv").



Here are some of the highlights:

- The national census data tells a wonderful story of what our Groups achieved in 2025. Youth membership grew by 2% (and 16% over the last 5 years). That's the best in the South-East of England and twice as good as our nearest 'rival'!
- Every District in the County has been reviewed, and each is focussed on the Four P's of People; Programmes; Places; Perception, and this Vision has been communicated across the County face-to-face through the Vision Roadshows that were well received.

- The County structure has been overhauled and brought more into line with the national concept of team structures that came in with Transformation at the end of 2024.
- Appointments have been made to all the senior leadership roles within the County except Programme Lead: Mark Scholfield as Support Lead; Connor Holmes as Volunteer Development Lead, and Tom Rasmusen as County Youth Lead.
- The Events Team, led by Sophia Wilks, is working hard to improve the event planning and approval process.
- A Learning Delivery Team, led by the recently appointed Toni Mitchell, began its mission to provide a 'one stop shop' for County provision, which will include First Response led by Sally Holmes.
- A County Nights Away Lead, Graham Osborn, was appointed.
- A Manager of the Activity Permit Scheme, Andrew Swayne, was appointed.
- The County Youth Team grew to four Scouters who were proactive in supporting District Youth Leads.
- The Board of Trustees began undertaking a detailed review of our finances.
- Our awards celebrations (both youth and adult) were reviewed, and work is ongoing to enhance that provision.
- Media and Communications provision began being reviewed.
- A new DLV for Mid-Sussex, Keith Waller, was appointed
- Attending wonderful St George's Day celebrations, including 2nd Ifield's marvellous Dinner Dance; being present at the opening of the 5th Hayward Heath's new HQ; seeing the achievements of our scouts and explorers competing in the Overland.
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The drive, enthusiasm, and commitment of West Sussex volunteers is energising and empowering. We are so fortunate to have our roles in this amazing County!

Joe Rogerson

County Lead

(January 2026 onwards)

Julia Kielstra

Deputy County Lead

Our Purpose and Method

Scouting actively engages and supports young people in their personal development, empowering them to make a positive contribution to society. In partnership with adults, young people take part in fun indoor and outdoor activities. They learn by doing, by sharing in spiritual reflection and by taking responsibility. They make choices, undertake new and challenging activities and they live their Scout Promise.

Our values, as Scouts, are at the heart of who we are and what we do:

Integrity - We are honest, we try to do the right thing, and we stay true to ourselves.

Respect - We are thoughtful of people's feelings and values, treating everyone as we would like others to treat us.

Care - We are kind to others, and our world.

Belief - We explore beliefs and attitudes with open minds.

Cooperation - We work with others to change the world for the better, whilst making friends.

West Sussex Scouts is open to all young people in West Sussex aged between four and twenty-five no matter what background, ethnic origin, nationality, race, gender, marital or sexual status, mental or physical ability, political or religious belief.

Thousands of committed, experienced and trained volunteers, in teams across the County, provide Scouting in West Sussex through 10 Districts and 106 Scout Groups.

The Trustees have a duty to report on our public benefit in our annual report. We have assessed our aims, activities and charitable objectives, which are to contribute to the development of young people in achieving their full physical, intellectual, social and spiritual potentials as individuals, as

responsible citizens and as members of their local, national and international communities.

We believe that we have met the Charity Commission's public benefit criteria for both the advancement of citizenship and community development. The Scout Movement complies with two key principles set by the Commission:

1. Identifiable benefit

The way we carry out Scouting helps young people's personal development, empowering them to make a positive contribution to society via the Purpose of Scouting.

2. Public benefit

Scouting is a national Movement open to young people aged between 4 and 25 and to adults. Full membership is restricted to young people and adults who are willing to make the Scout Promise. The Association enables those in poverty to benefit from Scouting; while the Association charges a subscription to its members, no-one is excluded from the benefits of Scouting. Locally, we try to waive costs for those who cannot afford to pay. There are also funds available for setting up new Groups and Sections and for young people's uniform and Scouting activities so that we do not exclude young people from activities if they cannot pay.

WEST SUSSEX SCOUTS HAS:

PEOPLE	PROGRAMMES	PLACES	PERCEPTION
An ever-increasing number of youth members and of skilled, qualified adults.	All youth members benefitting from high quality, well resourced, balanced, youth shaped, progressive programmes.	Scouting enjoyed in safe, welcoming, fit-for-purpose places within Districts as well as in Groups that have a secure income and sound governance.	More visibility with Scouting being seen to play a key role in society.
Amazing People	Amazing Programmes	Amazing Places	Amazing Media
Promoting and enabling growth in adult and youth membership by upskilling Districts and Groups. Developing the West Sussex Learning Team to provide first class skills learning to enable volunteers to enhance the progressive Programme. Ensuring compliance with mandatory learning through subsidiarity.	Promoting and enabling quality youth shaped programmes. Supporting quality youth shaped programmes. Monitoring quality youth shaped programmes. Increasing the number of Top Awards. Promoting and enabling international opportunities.	Promoting and enabling good governance. Promoting and enabling high-quality administration.	Providing quality media coverage. Supporting District and Group media. Providing media opportunities to Scouts. Promoting and enabling good quality county-wide communications.



How have we been doing?

People

Promoting and enabling growth:

Growth requires a combination of offering a great programme, plenty of new adult volunteers and ever more spaces for young people to join.

This year our youth membership is up by 2% to 9,020 young people across the 10 Districts in West Sussex. We saw the largest growth in Scouts, Cubs and Squirrels but a negligible drop off in numbers of Beavers and Explorers

Year	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026
Squirrels	12	135	188	348	524
Beavers	2,194	2,206	2,230	2,162	2,153
Cubs	2,750	2,784	2,848	2,694	2,713
Scouts	2,595	2,565	2,685	2,529	2,534
Explorers	949	1,082	1,102	1,104	1,096
Total YP	8,500	8,772	9,053	8,837	9,020

Our waiting list continues to rise (by 312) and we will continue to look for opportunities to get as many of those young people as possible involved in Scouting.

The work done by our Growth Officer, Joe Firth, continues to be of the highest calibre, and we thank him for his extraordinary efforts.



Celebrating achievement:

Giving an award is an important way to thank our volunteer members for their incredible service and to recognise our youth members for their amazing achievements. The following awards were all presented in the 2025/26 year. Congratulations go to all the recipients.

Adult Awards

Bar to Silver Acorn

Nigel Friswell

Toni Mitchell

Silver Acorn

Paul Banyard

Christopher Sillett

Paul Chaplain

Matthew Edwards

Ian Buckman

Brian Barker

Thomas Smith

Award for Merit

Simon Barker

Paul Sturgeon

Leanne Penfold

David Lawton

Elaine Clark

Helen Thomas

Harry Rippon

Laura Mitchell

Karen Keen

Ellen Barker

Peter Sutton

Neil Phillips

Elizabeth Mace

Michael Donnely

Emma Wallace

Russell Stallibrass

David Moss

Mark Larcombe

Roger Belton

Stephen Taylor

William Power

Adrian Marshall

Anne Heathcock

Maria Woods

Susan Stempt

Mark Noakes

Kevin Lawrence

Richard Bustin

Hugh Tennent

Benjamin Mitchell

Duncan Inch

Chief Scout's Commendations for Good Service

Yvonne Barr

Elizabeth Miles

Kathleen Knight

Samantha Fullman

Gregory Charman

Kate Stanford

Henry Lowis

Jane Hillman

Harvey Cranford

Kay Blackwell

Alys Ransom

Simon Legg

Colin Gardner

Paul Clarke

Emmalene Staples

Joseph Mansfield

Colin Jackson

Steven Elliott

Joanne Broom

Adam Smith

Alexander Loveridge

Andrew Gilham

Anne Cole

Christopher Wilmshurst

Terence Mayell

James Keys

James Flint

Allan Brown

Daniel Smith

Clare Wright

Samuel Hales

Jason Cooke

Youth Awards

King's Scout Award

Charlotte Anderson

Connor Holmes

Bradley Bullimore

Rebecca Hull

Benjamin Cotton

Courtney Palmer-Jones

Faith Edwards

Lauren Parisi

Robert Fellingham

Thomas Poole

Alex Foxcroft

Milia Watts

Lily Graham

Megan Whitfield

Amelia Head

All Youth Awards (2025 in brackets)

Chief Scout Acorn Award: 179 (83)

Chief Scout Bronze Award: 652 (581)

Chief Scout Silver Award: 570 (580)

Chief Scout Gold Award: 218 (335)

Chief Scout Platinum Award: 70 (42)

Chief Scout Diamond Award: 28 (51)

King Scout Awards: 19 (9)

Explorer Belts: 8 (0)

Young Leader Belts: 26 (36)

In addition, 213 (161) Duke of Edinburgh Awards were achieved by West Sussex Scouts: Bronze: 111 (97); Silver: 76 (42) and Gold: 26 (22)

Providing top quality learning:

Learning for all roles in West Sussex continues to be delivered centrally and locally, but mainly online.

We continue to see excellent numbers of Wood Badge completions and Mandatory Ongoing Learning - Safety and Safeguarding – has substantially increased with close to 100% compliance in each of those modules across the County, a tremendous achievement with DLVs and GLVs playing a huge part in achieving those results.

First Response sees a continued upwards trend in completions, testament to the efforts of the First Aid Training Team led by Sally Holmes.

Moving forwards, the changes to the way adults now undertake learning is bringing challenges as we get to grips with new systems. However, with the development of the West Sussex Learning Hub, led by Toni Mitchell, to provide all (non-online) learning, including practical skills learning, West Sussex will have a 'one stop shop' that will enable adult volunteers to upskill at their own pace.

Programme

Programme development led by the inimitable Matt Pike saw its apogee in the reintroduction of the famous West Sussex International Jamboree (WSIJ) at Ardingly during the summer of 2025. The event was a great success, and it was such a marvellous event that planning with Sussex West and Sussex Central Guides has already begun for a repetition in 2028. Huge thanks are due to the leadership team, and all the many adult volunteers who committed so much time to ensuring that the event was as successful as it could be for all the many participants from across the County and across the world.

The annual Go Beavers event was equally impressive, and the Go Beavers Crew deserve every accolade for providing our Beavers with the go-to event of the year, every year. Their commitment is an example to us all. Go Beavers 2025 brought together 800 Beaver Scouts for an action-packed day of adventure and fun. The introduction of Laser Tag in the woods proved to be a hugely popular new activity, complementing an exciting programme that included the Cavebus, Planetarium, High-adventure Activities, Fire Lighting, STEM Activities, and much, much more. Sincere thanks go to West Sussex Fire & Rescue Service and EDSFAT for their valued support in helping to deliver such a fantastic event. Above all, grateful thanks go to the incredible team of volunteers whose dedication and enthusiasm made the day possible. Many of them have supported Go Beavers every year since it began in 2018, and their continued commitment is at the heart of the event's ongoing success.

Unfortunately, the equally impressive Downsman event had to be cancelled due to severe weather conditions, which was a huge letdown for the organising team, who had spent so much time putting the event together, and for the many participants who had been preparing for this great challenge. Thankfully the Overland event organised by East Sussex Scouts, but with considerable support from many of our Scouters, was its usual raging success.

Supporting adults to deliver the programme also means giving them the training they need to be confident in sharing the core skills with our youth members and, as mentioned above, this year, we have begun the work of launching the West Sussex Scouts Learning Hub by talking to key people in the County with a view to providing new practical skills modules in traditional Scouting skills such as camping, bushcraft and pioneering, as well as delivering a full range of high-quality courses that cover the breadth of the Scouting programme.

As we start to reorganise ourselves around the new Scouting team structures, Districts have been appointing Programme Leads, and the County continues to look to recruit someone to lead its Programme Team, to give purpose and direction to our leaders so that the progressive programme becomes a reality across the County.

Promoting and enabling international opportunities:

The West Sussex Scouts Visits Abroad Team exists to support leaders and young people with international programmes and experiences. The Team supports leaders looking to organise travel abroad and ensures compliance with the Visits Abroad process; co-ordinates UK Contingent participations in events such as the World Scout Jamboree, Moot and Roverway; shares ideas for delivering international programme activities and information about World Scouting; and supports the international elements of the youth awards scheme

We are delighted to be sending our Unit to the next World Jamboree in Poland and by the end of the reporting year the Unit had taken part in two excellent training camps. We have an outstanding team of leaders who will definitely ensure that the Jamboree journey will be a memorable one for each and every participant. We also had many adult volunteers accepted for the International Support Team for the Jamboree, which demonstrated, yet again, the commitment of West Sussex to support World Scouting.

Similarly, preparations for this year's Explorer Belt Expedition to Europe were well underway with the participants and the supervising leadership team looking forward to another successful summer. By the time of the AGM the teams will have given their presentations to others and, hopefully will have achieved the coveted Explorer Belt, which is, with the King's Scout Award, the highest award in Scouting



West Sussex International Jamboree Unit 66

Places

Promoting and enabling high-quality administration:

The administration of the County continued to run smoothly through the year due to the efforts of Aby and Sue to whom the Trustees extend their heartfelt thanks.

Financial management of the County continues to be monitored by our County Treasurer. The Board continues to review our financial processes with a view to providing the Board with a flow of appropriate financial information and understandable commentary to the Trustees.

The County has continued to promote the mandatory requirement for Trustee members at all levels of Scouting to complete various online training modules in addition to that specifically for Trustees. The training has continued to be supported by a national programme of webinars. The County recognises that the number of Trustees recorded on the digital system may not reflect the number who sits on Group and District Trustee Boards and that in turn does not allow an accurate measure of the Trustee training undertaken.

The moves by Scout Headquarters to provide more effective governance at County, District and Group level have been promulgated and promoted by the County Team

Perception

During the last year, West Sussex Scouts has continued to be publicised in a variety of means with all major events covered by photography and videography, with galleries and event videos being produced and shared across social media. We have been fortunate to receive coverage in print media, too, where it exists at local level across the county, with positive articles relating to programme and achievement of our youth members. Since January 2026, when our media lead Max Dench stepped back, the Media Team have been reviewing their organisation to become even more effective in the future.



Responsibilities of the Board of Trustees

Charity law requires the Trustees to prepare financial statements for each year that give a true and fair view of the situation of the Charity at the year-end, its incoming resources and resources spent during the year. In preparing these financial statements, the Trustees are required to:

- Select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently
- Make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent
- State whether applicable accounting standards and statements of recommended practice have been followed, subject to any departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements
- Prepare the financial statements on a going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charity will continue in operation

The Board of Trustees is responsible for keeping proper accounting records that disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charity. This allows the Board to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Charities Act 2011. The Board is also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charity and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

West Sussex County Scout Council is a charity registered in England and Wales number 1046955. It is governed by the Scout Association Royal Charter (1912, as amended). It adopts the constitution as defined in section 5.6 of the Scout Association POR (Policy, Organisation and Rules).

Trustee Selection and Training

With effect from 2024, the Trustees (except for those who hold an ex-officio appointment to the Board) are nominated following an open selection process and approved by the members of the County Scout Council at the Annual General Meeting. Trustees often already understand both Scouting generally and of how the County is organised and run. On appointment, they are provided with the link to the Charity Trustee Information Pack produced by the Charities Commission that explains the legal duties and responsibilities of charity trustees. All new Trustees are required to be a member of The Scout Association and undertake a training course for Trustees.

Risk Policy

We undertake risk assessments for all major County activities in accordance with the recommendations and requirements of the Scout Association's published document entitled "Policy, Organisation and Rules". The County maintains a risk register used as a risk management tool to fulfil regulatory compliance and to act as a repository for all risks identified to the County Scout Council. It includes additional information about each risk, e.g., the nature of the risk, reference and owner and the appropriate mitigation measures.

Need and Skill Requirements

The Trustees entrust the training of adults in Scouting in accordance with the rules of The Scout Association, to the Learning Delivery Lead and her team under the guidance of the County Lead Volunteer. The Trustees have the responsibility to train any paid staff.

Conclusion

The Trustees wish to record their sincere thanks to all the adults who give of their time, effort, and expertise to enable young people in West Sussex to enjoy Scouting at its very best.

The Board would like to acknowledge the financial assistance given by many organisations and individuals, which enables Groups, Districts, and the County to provide better Scouting for the young people of West Sussex.

For and on behalf of the Board of Trustees of West Sussex County Scout Council

Tim Taylor
County Chair

