

1st Merrow Scout Group
 2022 Annual General Meeting
 10 November 2022
 Start 19.50

Attendees:

Chair	Andrew Whitcombe (AW)
Group Scout Leaders	Sandy Jones (SJ) Martin Jones (MJ)
Treasurer	Samantha Ritchie (SR)
Section Leaders	Sarah York (SY), Magdalena Littrup-Fiil Mark Watson (MW), Andrew Haslehurst (AH), Donald Tournier (DT), Cheryl de Suys Shrubbs (CdSS), Sam McCarthy (SM), Iain Robertson (IR), Chris Walker (CW), Chris Ney (CN)
Executive	Dave Johnson (DJ)
District Chair	Dennis Lester (DL)
Acting District Commissioner	Richard Ayears (RA)
Guildford East SASU	Michael Eagle (ME)
Secretary	Gemma Gregson (GG)

1. Introduction

MJ opened the meeting and welcomed everyone.

2. Joint GSLs' nomination of Group Chair

MJ explained the Group Chair is jointly nominated by the GSLs with no vote needed. MJ and SJ nominate Andrew Whitcombe. MJ explained that AW's boys joined the Scout Group from Beavers and now one is a Scout Leader and the other an Explorer Scout so AW knows the Group and has experience of the various sections.

AW took over chairing the meeting

3. Apologies for absence

Apologies have been received from Keith Blessley, Denise Stafford, Simon Owens, Kath Ebdon, Mike Ebdon, Karen Summers, Claire Brown and Paul Brown.

4. Minutes of previous annual general meeting

There are no minutes from the last meeting due to exceptional circumstances.

5. Treasurer's report and adoption of accounts for year ended 31 March 2022

Group Treasurer, SR, took the AGM through the receipts and payments accounts, which have been approved by the Executive Committee, noting they are on a receipts and payments basis rather than an accruals basis.

- Membership income has been received this year, after deferring it last year due to Covid.
- The Group received valuable Covid grants from Guildford Borough Council which replaced fundraising which has been minimal over the last two years due to Covid. The grants have enabled scaffolding to be built which provided a covered, ventilated space and allowed earlier return to face to face meetings for larger numbers than would have been the case had only indoor space been available.

- There has once again been a donation from the Explorer Unit, who use the 1st Merrow facilities but are legally part of the Guildford East District, towards the cost of the premises and equipment.
- The lifting of Covid restrictions has allowed a healthy and varied Scout programme with expenditure in respect of badges, camping and other Scouting activities, as well as repair and maintenance.
- Insurance payments appear low as the insurance is in respect of a part-year only. Following a question, SR explained that this is the last year under the current insurance provider. Scout Unity will be providing insurance cover once the current contract expires, at a lower cost.
- There is no Gift Aid on a receipts basis as subscriptions were not paid last year due to Covid.
- Total year end cash funds of £219K which is above the level required for operating expenses but is explained by the need to redevelop the scout hut in the future. .

Following questions, SR clarified that 1st Merrow is registered for business rates but effectively receive a discount of 100% due to our charity status (80% mandatory and 20% discretionary). The accounts cover activity for all sections noting Scoutabout is not in there as accounts are on a receipts and payments, rather than accruals basis.

The level of cash in current account was discussed. Some of this will be moved once further clarity is gained re the timing of work on the scout hut.

Proposer: CN

Secunder: IR

Approved.

6. Joint Group Scout Leaders' (GSL) Report

MJ provided a verbal report from the GSLs:

Programme and structure

- Pleased to be GSLs since July 2021.
- The Group is thriving having coming back strong following suspension of face to face activities due to Covid.
- Activities through Covid included virtual meetings and virtual sleepovers and ongoing electronic contact with young people. The grant-funded scaffolding structure, enabled an early return to face to face meetings.
- The Group is now operating as it should with the usual activities and all sections have returned to overnight camping.
- Badge costs have been higher than previously due to a busy scouting year:
 - Beavers have achieved 16 bronze scout challenge badges and more than 600 other challenge and activity badges.
 - Cubs – 20 silver challenge badges and nearly 900 other.
 - Scouts – three gold and 400 other
 - Explorers – five platinum and nearly 100 other.
 - 2000 activity and challenge badges in total.
- The programme has been varied including creative craft, cycling, mechanics, food-related activities, sunrise hike, Scoutabout, frost camp, survival camp, county expedition, the Explorers cycling to south coast, night hikes, cooking indoors and open fires. The Scouts have

learnt teamwork and lots of skills for life enabling them to achieve and develop in ways that are not available at school.

- The Scout Group comprises 250 young people across 9 sections.
- The Scouts were split into two Troops in September 2021 with Lightning on a Friday and Thunder on a Tuesday. Hurricane is being launched with its first trial on Saturday (12 November) with nine young people, each with an adult to support. Intention is for this to be a monthly troop meeting running on a Saturday.
- The waiting list for all sections is long with names being added each week.

Volunteers

The GSLs requested to record a public record of thanks to the leaders, and their efforts with regards to weekly meetings, planning, risk assessments, camp planning and accounts.

GSLs also thanked volunteers on the Executive who have stood down this year after years of service:

Henriette Whitehead van Prooije - Chair

Sue Reekie – membership secretary

Marijke Phillips - secretary

Special thank you to the dedication of David and Judith Hunt and Dave Mullenger who had 120 years of leadership between them. Following a question MJ confirmed that D&JH have expressed that they would prefer not to have a leaving party, but a gift will be organised for them.

MJ explained that they are actively looking for new volunteers including to clean the huts, help with fundraising and a new membership secretary.

Buildings

MJ explained how the scout hut buildings are near the end of their life. DJ, a member of the Executive Committee, is leading the design, tender and build of new buildings. This will require more fundraising in order to commit to building work.

Following a question, the GSLs explained that necessary maintenance of the huts will continue and a new maintenance process is being put into place following recent Executive Committee leavers, including the recruitment of a volunteer to co-ordinate maintenance.

The issue as to whether the Group would consider a new section, Squirrels, for ages four to five was discussed. It was agreed this should wait until better facilities and resources are available including buildings and the right leaders.

7. Appointment and election of Members of Executive Committee

It was proposed the following should be elected as a block:

SR to continue as Treasurer

DJ to continue as member of Exec Committee to lead building project.

GG as new Group Secretary

Proposed by: SM

Seconder: MW

All accepted.

Approved

Other volunteer recruitment was discussed including parent representatives from each of scouts, cubs and beavers. A flyer has been distributed via email to all parents.

8. Appointment of Independent Examiner

Karen Summers has agreed to continue to review accounts for another year.

Proposer: SJ

Seconder: ME

Agreed: by all.

9. District Commissioner

RA, Acting District Commissioner, explained that he was working with Guildford West to re-merge Guildford East and Guildford West with the hope that it is in place by the end of Spring 2023. No significant impact to 1st Merrow is expected and the merger is aiming to improve opportunities for young people across the district and streamline administration and reduce bureaucracy.

Service awards were awarded to:

SM, Scouts - Lightning Troop: 5 years

CdSS, Cubs - Willow 10 years

SR, Group Treasurer: 20 years

10. Close of meeting

The meeting closed at 20.36.