



Scouts
Oxfordshire

2022/2023 Review





County Chair and County Commissioner

It's been another eventful year, as we celebrated the Queen's Platinum Jubilee with tea, camps and beacon lighting. Oxfordshire Gang Show celebrated its 70th show. And Scouts across the County supported their fellow Scouts in Ukraine by raising funds and supporting those away from home through the development of a Ukrainian Scouts Video Dictionary to help them learn words and phrases in English. We also, of course, mourned the death of our patron HM Queen Elizabeth II.

2022-23 was also the year we saw the introduction of Squirrels to Oxfordshire! Four Dreys opened in three different Districts to cater for our newest members aged between 4 and 6 years old. The sections opened at 2nd Oxford, 1st Hagbourne, 1st Harwell and Witney Buttercross Scout Groups.

With the inclusion of Squirrels, we now offer Scouting for young people between the ages of 4 and 24. A staggering age range which shows the strength and depth of the programme

being delivered by The Scouts. In addition, we are reaching new communities each year, expanding our reach and inclusivity. Overall, we saw a 3.7% growth in the number of young people involved in Oxfordshire Scouting over the last year.

And we couldn't do it without the continued support of our adult volunteers across the County in Groups, Districts and the County Team. So, congratulations and thank you to every single volunteer that helped us provide the incredible Scout experience to over 6,500 young people every week. What you do changes lives and your commitment is not something that we underestimate. And that includes all the Trustees and supporters without whom Scouting wouldn't happen; effective support and governance, which often happens behind the scenes, is key to ensuring Scouting happens safely and resources are available as needed.

The coming year will be a year of change for the movement as nationally we work towards the final stage of the 'Skills for Life' Strategic Plan. This last

phase focuses on making Scouting easier for our volunteers with changes to help us:

- Give a warmer welcome;
- Deliver better learning; and
- Simplify how we volunteer together.

The changes will see new team structures, changes to how we appoint and induct new volunteers and learning that is flexible and specific to our volunteers' needs and the tasks they undertake, overall making it easier for new volunteers to join and enjoy a role that fits their time commitments. There are also some changes ahead to the responsibilities and structure of Trustee Boards who run the governance in our various charities and help align with best practice guidance from the Charity Commission; across Oxfordshire we will do our best to implement this to their full extent.

Within Oxfordshire the strategy fits with our development plan and will support our aims to:

- Improve the volunteer journey to support our volunteers;
- Improve support for the 14 - 24 age range, keeping more young people in Scouting longer;
- Improve diversity across the County; and

- Increase community support via community impact projects

The changes will help us to reach new communities within Oxfordshire allowing us to grow our numbers of young people and adult volunteers alike. All of which we have started to do over the last year by working with other local organisations including Multaka and Seesaw. Multaka are supporting the County programme team (read more about this later in this report), whilst Seesaw work with bereaved children to support them through their grief. Sadly, we see the effects of bereavement often in our Groups, particularly where our young people are affected by the sudden death of a leader. Having their support to navigate these emotional times is important for both the leadership team and the young people, so it's fantastic to be able to build connections with them.

Looking back too many activities have taken place to mention them all, but to give a flavour of what has taken happened we have seen: leadership skills days; county events for young people; international trips, including skiing in Italy and exploring in Bosnia, Sweden, Slovakia and

Switzerland. Plus, training sessions for water activities, first aid and gender identity for both young leaders and adult volunteers; attendance at Oxford Pride and participation in the Jamboree on the Internet. The work done by our volunteer team to provide amazing opportunities to Young People has resulted in us seeing them across the County achieve their top awards, earn badges and support one another and their communities.

We've seen a number of changes within the County Team over the last 12 months. We would like to take the opportunity to give thanks to Ben Smith who has worked tirelessly over the past eight years as County Treasurer and to Sarah Strudley and David Parry-Jones who have stepped down as Deputy County Commissioners for Adult Support and Events respectively.

Our thanks also go to our three employees: Michelle, Chris and Lucy who provide invaluable support to volunteers and help keep the County & Districts running smoothly. We are incredibly lucky to have them as part of the team – thank you for all that you do.

Finally, we would like to say how incredibly proud we are of Jamie who represented Oxfordshire at

the state funeral of HM Queen Elizabeth II and Matthew, Holly, and Eleanor who supported the coronation of HM King Charles III. An incredible honour for them all and we know they will have memories and friendships as a result that will last a lifetime.

Wendy Tatham
County Commissioner

Phil Earl
Chair of the County Trustee Board

Growth and Development

Scouting in Oxfordshire has continued to grow with the number of Explorers and Cubs seeing the largest increases over the past year. Whilst on the whole, we are still returning to pre-pandemic numbers, we are already exceeding those numbers across our Explorer Units which is amazing!

At our last annual count in January, we had our first 54 Squirrels recorded, which is fantastic. The expansion of Squirrels for 4- to 6-year-olds will help to see Scouting grow even further and we have plans to see more Squirrel Dreys opening across the County to complement the four Dreys opened this year.

We have seen a total of 17 new Sections open across the County, which includes 4 new Explorer Units. This has provided an additional 280 young people a chance to participate in Scouting. However, we have a long way to go to being able to provide enough places for the 1,000+ young people on our waiting lists. Our barriers to opening new sections is access to suitable premises and new

volunteers to lead them – so if you can help with either, please do get in touch.

Over the past year we have been working with the national Growth and Communities team to help recruit new volunteers and Chris, our Growth and Support Officer, has been key to supporting groups locally with their recruitment campaigns alongside her role to recruit and induct new Group Scout Leaders.

We have also seen national initiatives that have supported Groups with recruitment including The Big Help Out over the Kings Coronation weekend in which we saw local Groups in the County hosting cream teas and helping their communities with activities like litter picking. Raising the profile of Oxfordshire Scouts is a target for us over the coming year and should be easy to do with all the great activities that Groups are participating in.

We've seen Beavers helping with community gardens, Cubs visiting and entertaining residents in their local care home at Christmas, Scouts participating in Earth Hour and Explorers and Network Units supporting festivals including

Cropredy with car parking, bin duties, litter picking and more. Every year we also see all Sections participating in their local St Georges Day and Remembrance Day parades. So much to be proud of across the County and no wonder we continue to see our membership grow.





Adult Training

Great training means we have great leaders across the County. It helps them to feel more capable, competent, and confident in the activities they are delivering which means better Scouting for our young people.

Training in Oxfordshire has had a great year with the team supporting new leaders through their Getting Started modules plus delivering first aid, personal learning plans and various modules of the adult training scheme in multiple locations across the County as well as online.

Our training advisers have also continued to offer direct support to our volunteers at a local level, offering encouragement and validation of training modules whilst supported by Local Training Managers. In the last year we have seen over 1,600 training modules validated plus more than 1,500 mandatory training modules completed covering safety, safeguarding and first aid. We have also had 61 adults complete the adult training scheme and gain their Wood Badge.

Over the coming year, nationally we will see significant changes to our adult training scheme. The changes will make learning more accessible to all volunteers and ensure that everyone gets the right training that is appropriate to the tasks they perform. As a result, it will see the Wood Badge become optional as we appreciate that every volunteer brings a different skill set and each has their own level of time to give. We want to ensure all volunteers have key core learning to make Scouting safe and fun but appreciate that not all volunteers have the time to complete all the training on offer especially if there is no direct link to the tasks they have agreed to support. At the same time, all training will be available to everyone to allow our volunteers to grow and learn at their own pace and specific to their needs.

We can only do this with the continued support of every member of our training team; many of whom are fulfilling other Scouting roles too. Thank you to everyone that has supported and continues to support training in Oxfordshire.

Good Service Awards

We have hundreds of amazing volunteers across the County and every year they give up their time to deliver or support amazing programmes of activities, events and camps and provide unique opportunities to develop Skills for Life for Young People. However, there are some that are exceptional and have provided outstanding service over a number of years and we acknowledged them with good service awards. The recipients over the past year can be seen below:

Silver Wolf

Brian Zimmerman
David Burton
Penny Hannigan

Bar to the Silver Acorn

Andy Young
Ray Wooloff

Silver Acorn

Adrian Edwards
Alan Cockbill

David Stretton-Smith
Eileen Bracken
Hilary Rogerson
Julie Davidson
Margaret Bloggs
Paul O'Brien
Richard Geoff Crompton
Sarah Townsend
Susan Hooper
Thomas Kyffin
Timothy Scane
Tristan Stone

Award for Merit

Adrian Soper
Anne Barras
Ashley Strong
Barney Light
Bridget Gay
Cheryl Tree
Chloe Procter
Claire Griffin
Craig Francis
David Adamson
Deborah Barlow
Dennis Hammond

Graham Cook
Jaco Mare
James Thorne
Jules Wale
Katharine Thomas
Lorraine Aspell
Marcus Goodwin
Maxwell Thomas
Michael Punter
Peter Illman
Philip Small
Ray Goodwin
Robert Mannix
Ross Herriot
Sadiq Abbasi
Steve Hill
Tom Haley

Ceri Osborne
Chris Elson
Damien Bird
David Christensen
Dawn Pickford
Eliza Carpenter
Fiona Mills
Gillian Wilson
Helen Barnby-Porritt
Jack Monk
Jack Slade
James Hopkins
James Shaw
Janet Shannon
John Ireland
Josh Page
Judith Bond
Julie Dagg
Julie Townsend
Kerry Brown
Larissa Richards
Laura Bonner
Linda Cole
Liz Archer
Louise Davidson
Mac Mackriell

Chief Scout's Commendation for Good Service

Andy Browne
Alex Yudin
Andrew Baron
Andrew Robbins
Andy Haynes
Andy Haynes
Anna Bishop

Mark Aspell
Matthew Szyndel
Megan Magrosky
Michael McLellan
Michelle Jackson
Michelle McInerney
Nick Hopkins
Nick Rhymes
Nick Speller
Oliver Brett
Richard Brant
Robin Slater
Ross Edmonds
Sarah George
Sarah Wood
Sharon Daley
Stephen Mayo
Tez Bowler
Tim Daly
Tim Hurst
Tina Jackson
Tracy Winfield
Zoe Mare



Adult Support

Supporting our volunteers is essential to ensuring that Scouting in Oxfordshire continues to grow and our adult support team do this throughout the year alongside the training team.

The team is varied in the support they offer, from helping adult volunteers earn adventurous activity and nights away permits, to safety advice and providing support and training around inclusion and diversity.

The past year has seen the team provide paddle sports instructor and canoeing core coach training sessions, workshops on autism and gender identity, plus mental health first aid sessions. All of which helps ensure that volunteers have the skills needed to provide an opportunity for young people of every age, background and ability to participate in Scouting in Oxfordshire.

The inclusion team have been working closely with Groups across the County where additional

support and advice has been required to ensure that our volunteers have the skills to support young people on a weekly basis. This includes how to have meaningful conversations with parents to ensure we are really meeting the individual needs of young people.

The safety team have been working with adult volunteers to ensure they are confident with their approach to risk assessments and risk management not only for activities but also buildings and resources owned by the Groups. They have visited several Groups across the County to help advise on safety of buildings. With the forthcoming changes to our Trustee Boards the safety team will be even more valuable to Groups and their Trustees.

Thanks go to Anne, Robert, Ian and Sarah who help lead the adult support team and support the wider team in all the work they do.

Programme

2022-23 has been a far more promising one for the county programme team, than the last two years, with Covid restrictions lifting and Scouting returning to the new normal. We have been able to deliver more in-person support for section leaders around the county, although with the option to meet virtually as required, which has been a welcome change.

The programme team have worked hard to support programmes being run by groups across the county for all sections, providing activity ideas, and supporting leader development to enable them to provide quality programmes that enable young people to achieve their top awards.

In addition to the work that they've been doing to support individual sections, and groups, the programme team took the opportunity afforded by the return to face-to-face Scouting in April 2022 to bring both new and experienced section leaders together for a skills weekend to showcase programme resources available as well highlight

some external charitable organisations needing community support. Due to the success of this event another one is planned for April 2023, focusing more on practical outdoor skills, and, potentially, a further indoor one for winter 2023 too.

We have also looked to support local community groups and an example of this is the developing relationship with Multaka in Oxford. Multaka – which means meeting point in Arabic – uses the two university museums, Science Museum and Pitt Rivers Museum, to bring communities together, strengthening cultural understanding through the mutual sharing of art, stories, culture, and science. The programme works with local community organisations that support people settling in Oxford as refugees and asylum seekers. Multaka will be supporting the next skills day and we will be planning a day event in Oxford with them later in the year.

The 14-24 age range has continued to be a particular focus for the team as the membership of Network units have been slower to recover from the impact of Covid than the younger sections. Development of Network and Explorer units, and

working with the county events and district teams, remains a key objective for the team. As a key part of the county development plan this will be continuing work to ensure they all reach their full potential.

Lorraine Crowther, Assistant County Commissioner for the 6-14 age sections, left the team recently and I would like to take this opportunity to thank her for all her efforts during the last year. Joseph Goodwin has recently joined the team to develop the county Minecraft server as a programme resource.

The Assistant County Commissioners in the programme team are currently Graham Brewis for Cubs, Fraser Stokes for Scouts, Andrew Leech for Explorer Scouts, Richard Owen for Young Leaders, Lucy Kennett for explorer belt, Kirsty Dare for international programme and Lee Besley for Network. David Ralphs is the programme coordinator for Duke of Edinburgh and Kings Scout award schemes.

Marcus Goodwin
Deputy County Commissioner (Programme)





Events

2022-23 has seen many of our events return. May saw the comeback of our annual Awards Day where hundreds of Young People and adults from Oxfordshire attended Youlbury to be presented with their top awards. As well as the formal presentation there was the chance to spend some time participating in the various activities including zip wire, campfire, crafts, and abseiling.

We also saw the return of Aquacamp in June and a new venue in Dorchester on Thames, allowing activities on the Thames and a 'no fuel' lake. Whilst there are some logistical challenges with the venue, over 320 young people with the support of over 100 adults had the chance to experience many different water activities from canoeing to stand up paddle boarding. All round it wasn't the driest weekend in June but the event was a great success.

RaidOx was also back to normal with various Explorer teams using their ingenuity to achieve the challenges set over the November weekend. The tasks included making their own stamp set

and advent calendar featuring their Unit members, create a totem pole, bake a hot dog cake, identify a number of locations across Oxford and answer questions including 'What two terms link Shannon and Yeu?' Something for every member of the Unit to help with and a great opportunity for Explorers to be seen in Oxford City Centre completing various tasks set there too.

CPCW - County Patrol Camping Weekend – returned in October. Hundreds of Scouts spent the weekend at Horley camp sitdeveloping their traditional camping and scouting skills. A back to basic offering was particularly helpful as skills had become rusty or lost over the COVID lock downs. More attendees than ever are expected next time.

Gang Show gave the chance for our young people to come together to learn and practice their performances at weekly rehearsals before putting on a week of shows at Radley College theatre in February. The show was the 70th in Oxfordshire and celebrated the show through the years and all those that have been instrumental in making it happen. We even saw some old cast members join the young people on stage.

The Oxfordshire Jamboree contingent, Crocs and Soxfordshire, have been preparing for their trip to South Korea including numerous training weekends to build skills and relationships ready to attend the main event in August 2023. They will join over 40,000 other Scouts from around the world to participate in a range of activities as part of the camp and have the opportunity to see different cultures and share experiences.

Our international events will continue too, as we have secured at least one patrol for Roverway event during the summer of 2024 for a group of 16-22 year olds. The event will see them undertake an expedition in Europe and then meet up with other patrols from across the world. Summer 2023 will also see a group of Scouts, who hosted and supported a trip our Scouts made to Bosnia, come to the UK, explore Oxfordshire and meet up with Scouts across the County.

Thanks must go to the event support teams who make them possible and allow the events to operate at the scale they do. The Fairies support team set up and manage our infrastructure and are

often seen managing traffic. OxChefs as ever feed our staff teams and First Aid provide that essential element.

Going forward, the events team are looking at how we can support more Scouts and Explorers undertaking their expeditions for the top Scout Awards and Duke of Edinburgh Awards across the County. We have put together a training day which will be followed by an expedition. In 2023, a pilot of the new event will take place to ensure we have the right provision for the future.

We also have plans to see the return of the Winter Challenge, our hike along the Ridgeway and would like to put on more events for Beaver and Cubs and reinstate CESAW for the Explorers.

For those not able to see the events happen, hopefully you will get the chance to see the amazing experiences the young people get via our media channels and hear comments from the attendees themselves.

Finally as I depart from Oxfordshire I would like to thank all those that have made the events happen

and supported my role. May events go from strength to strength.

David Parry-Jones

Deputy County Commissioner (Events)





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