



**Scouts**  
Oxfordshire

2024/2025 Review



## County Lead Volunteer and Chair of Trustee Board

**W**e have continued to see amazing Scouting take place for young people over the last year. Our annual review will provide just a snapshot of the many activities and opportunities that Scouting offers young people across the county.

A few of our highlights include:

- 6,357 young people and 2,101 adult volunteers are involved in Scouting in Oxfordshire
- 1,249 young people earned their 'top awards' – Chief Scout Acorn, Bronze, Silver, Gold, Platinum & Diamond Awards and King's Scout Awards
- County organised international trips including Roverway in Norway, Iceland Jamboree and skiing in Kandersteg plus various Group led expeditions
- 42 adult volunteers received long service or good service awards

Reflecting on the achievements, it's some feat that our volunteers managed to continue to deliver amazing Scouting activities whilst experiencing another year of challenges alongside fundamental changes to our structure. Their determination, dedication and resilience is the real accomplishment for 2024/25!

As a national organisation we have continued to see necessary adjustments resulting from the Prevention of Future Deaths report by HM Coroner following the Great Orme tragedy. This has resulted in a significant amount of work for our county management team and has also been a focus for our trustee board, ensuring that Oxfordshire is up to date with compliance. We have also seen the introduction of a new membership system for our volunteers and in addition to this there have been changes to the organisational structure of Scouting and every volunteer role has changed name!

The membership system now provides our volunteers with a central location for all their key

requirements – from learning opportunities to supporting nights away and adventurous activities. The new role titles and team structures make it easier for volunteers to find a role that works for them and the time they have to offer. Ahead of these substantial changes in November 2024 considerable time was put into planning the new county structure.

However, no amount of planning can prepare anyone for a fundamental system change, and it is no different for Scouts. Despite planning and data cleansing ahead of implementation, we have seen the inevitable teething issues and learning curves that come with change. Huge steps have been made since transforming to the new system and some real benefits are now being seen with more visibility and new digital systems in a number of key areas.

Our staff team have been a huge support through the changes and a fundamental part of our transformation team – learning the new system and then helping to resolve problems, setting volunteers up and liaising with headquarters to ensure our volunteers' issues have been resolved. Thank you, Michelle and Rhys, for all your hard work supporting our volunteers over the past year – we know it

hasn't been easy, and you've been at the centre of the challenges and handled the many frustrations with diligence and resolve.

And to our volunteer team. Thank you for your ongoing dedication and tenacity - we ask a lot and recognise it isn't always easy with family and work commitments. We've experienced challenges with effective communication since the change in system - which we hope are now behind us! We know that this has compounded the challenges faced this year – thank you for bearing with us.

Alongside the structure changes we have seen some of county team stepping down and new faces joining the team. Thank you to Richard Owen for all his efforts with the young leader programme over the last 6 years, Janet Duxbury for her time as district lead volunteer for North Oxfordshire, Katharine Murkett for her time as part of the District Lead Volunteer Team in King Alfred, Martin Richards who led our appointments advisory committee and Marcus Goodwin who led the programme team.

We have welcomed Katy Hadfield to the staff

team as local growth officer. Katy sits in the national growth and communities team but works directly with us in Oxfordshire to support growing Scouts. In the short time Katy has been in role, she has made a real impact supporting groups with recruitment and opening new sections.

More widely in the county, there have been so many positive Scouting activities and experiences that have taken place. A few of the amazing achievements include:

- 1st Stonesfield rebuilding their Scout HQ, having fundraised to support the project
- Squirrel Dreys have been opened and other sections across the county have been re-energised with new volunteers and new young people
- Emily, an Explorer Scout, was appointed as the High Sheriff Cadet and is supporting the High Sheriff of Oxfordshire at his engagements
- Young people have supported multiple community events including Blenheim Triathlon, Oxford Half Marathon, Cropredy Festival and Bloxham Steam & Country Fair
- Several Explorer Scout Units have participated

in Monopoly Run live in London

- Recognition of volunteers in the King's New's Year's Honours list

Our trustee board continues its work to ensure that our charity is well managed and governance is upheld. The board has recently completed a review of its reserves policy and has reallocated charitable funds to ensure that Scouting in Oxfordshire is well supported in the years ahead. Funds have been set aside specifically to focus on providing safe Scouting, to grow Scouting and to provide quality programme.

We can't thank all the volunteers in Oxfordshire enough for all you do to make Scouting happen in Oxfordshire – you're amazing!

Wendy Tatham and Phil Earl  
County Lead Volunteer and Chair of County  
Trustee Board

With thanks to 1st Wychwood Scout Group and 2nd Abingdon Scout Group for the permission to use their photos throughout this review from their adventures this summer.



# Leadership Team

## Youth Team

**T**his year, the youth team have continued to lead the way in championing youth voice across the county.

A standout achievement was hosting Oxfordshire's first county-wide youth forum, bringing together young people from across the area to help shape the future of Scouting. Designed by the county youth team and delivered by young people, the event tackled key themes such as inclusion, county strategy, youth-led Scouting, and youth representation.

Oxfordshire was chosen to host one of six national youth forums across the UK. Having the national event take place in our county was a true highlight for the youth team and a chance to show off the amazing city we call home. The event brought together over 400 young people and leaders from across the South of England and just being able to attend the event locally was an excellent experience and gave Katie, Wynn, Niamah & Euan loads of ideas to take back to their groups!

We also held our first youth forum camp, attended by 24 Explorers from across Oxfordshire. They engaged in seminars and discussions, and we're hugely grateful to Katy Hadfield and Tim Kidd for delivering excellent sessions. The young people shared honest and powerful perspectives about Scouting in their local areas, with some offering challenging narratives that will help shape future planning. Every attendee said they would return – a huge success for the team!

In addition, we supported the county's awards day at Youlbury, celebrating over 1,200 award recipients. We were honoured to host Deputy Lord Lieutenants, who presented awards alongside a fantastic team of young people.

Looking ahead, we're going bigger and better. We'll be focusing on developing district youth leads and supporting existing youth contingents across the county. We have six more youth forum sessions planned, another youth forum camp in March, and a dedicated 16–24 engagement day towards the end of the year.

A huge thank you to the youth team – Dan, Rob,

Ed and Katie – whose energy, creativity, and commitment have made all of this possible. I'm immensely proud of everything we've achieved and excited about what's to come.

Joseph Goodwin  
County Youth Lead



## Safeguarding

It has been great to meet so many of our volunteers out on camps and activities over the last year and I have been very happy to help with answering questions and queries linked to safeguarding. The trend of issues supported this year, at a local level, are around unkind and inappropriate behaviours between young people. To help leaders have been offered advice on how best to deal with the situation, sent the HQ behaviour agreement and have also been signposted, where appropriate, to speak with Anne Addison, as county inclusion lead.

This year we have seen a new and updated safeguarding learning module within the new membership system which has integrated the certificate and therefore instantly shown when learning has been completed. This has been a huge time saver for all involved, rather than having to remember to send a certificate to another volunteer to upload into the system. The new learning is more detailed than previously and many of our volunteers have commented on how useful it has been.

Thank you to everyone who has supported leaders to complete this learning online ahead of deadlines, ensuring they are compliant with mandatory learning and that safe Scouting happens in the county. Sadly, we are still having to suspend roles due to some volunteers not completing this learning in the expected timeframes however the numbers are much lower than they used to be.

Our volunteers will have noticed some updates to the national safeguarding pages during the year which have been in response to the Preventing Future Deaths report. It is clear that concerns need to be reported to the HQ safeguarding team and the section in POR around safeguarding can be found online. More specifically, the HQ Safe Scouting page has a wealth of information and supports leaders on how safeguarding should be considered within the programme.

Alongside the HQ learning and support resources, safeguarding has also featured as part of a Risk Assessment workshop that our county safety adviser has led across the county. I would encourage our volunteers to look out for these and attend if they can as many do not consistently

consider risks associated with safeguarding as part of their risk assessments for activities and camps. Going forward, I am looking to build a team to provide more support locally with low level concerns and to support cases that have been referred to the national team where assistance is requested locally. Hopefully by my next report there will be a team in place further strengthening our safeguarding practices across the county for all.

Finally, I'd like to thank all our volunteers for all that you do to ensure the young people in the county experience safe Scouting. Should you have any questions, please do get in touch, I am very happy to help.

Steph Fawdry  
County Safeguarding Advisor



## Safety

**T**here has been a real focus on safety over the past year which has resulted in additional support being provided across the County.

All volunteers have been required to complete a new safety learning module by summer 2025 which was released at the start of the calendar year. Whilst normally, all volunteers complete this learning on a three-yearly basis, everyone has been required to complete the new module which has been redeveloped by HQ in consultation with the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (RoSPA).

Risk assessment workshops have been run across the county to ensure all our volunteers are confident in assessing the risks for events and activities whether large or small. The workshops have provided volunteers a chance to explore the reasons why we complete risk assessments, dispel some myths around the requirements and provide an opportunity to discuss and work through examples.

In addition, support has been provided through

audits of local camp sites and support offered to groups for property risk assessments.

Going forward, the data from incidents will be analysed and investigations supported so that we can learn from experiences across the county, including near misses.

## Inclusion and Diversity

**O**ur vision for trauma-informed approaches to behaviour management within Scouting demonstrates how our adult leaders, youth teams, and volunteers have all played a part in building a culture rooted in inclusivity and continuous improvement.

### Successes

- **Adult Leadership Expansion:** More adult leaders have joined, providing support and guidance for our young people.
- **Mental Health Training:** Successful training and refresher sessions have raised leaders' confidence in supporting youth mental health.
- **Neurodiversity Training:** Training has been rolled out to make teams more accessible and responsive to all needs.
- **Support for Challenging Behaviour:** We have seen an increase in requests for support which have been met with targeted assistance, helping leaders manage challenging behaviour effectively.
- **Oxford Pride Participation:** Our youth team's

involvement helped make this year's event a success, showcasing our commitment to diversity.

Looking ahead we are committed to providing more training to address emerging needs and develop further our leaders' skills. We aim to deepen inclusivity, ensuring every young person feels welcomed and supported and are looking to continue to engage with the community; inspired by Oxford Pride.

We celebrate a year of meaningful achievements and look forward to building on these foundations for an even brighter, more inclusive future.

Anne Addison  
Inclusion and Diversity Team Lead



# Programme Team

## Top Awards Team

**T**hroughout 2024-2025 the team have been encouraging young people across the county to earn their top awards. This culminated in the annual awards day event in May 2025 at Scout Adventures, Youlbury where young people were able to celebrate their achievements and take part in some awesome activities.

In the year a staggering 1,249 young people achieved a Chief Scout Award, 76 young people achieved a Duke of Edinburgh Award, 10 Explorers achieved their Young Leader Belt, 4 young people achieved their Explorer Belt and 2 young people achieved their Kings Scout Award!

In November 2024 we held the county's first Scouts of the World award discovery weekend, the first requirement to this Network only award. We now have 3 young people undertaking their project within the county.

As part of the Duke of Edinburgh Award scheme Oxfordshire Scouts volunteered a total of 1,391

hours in 2024-25 which has a social value of £8,901!

Looking ahead to 2025-26 we want to raise the profile of Scouts of the World Award, support Explorer Groups in running successful Explorer Belt trips and increase the number of Chief Scout Awards being achieved!

Matthew House  
Top Awards Team Lead



## **Nights Away and Adventurous Activities**

**O**ur nights away and adventurous activities teams have seen significant changes as a result of the implementation of the new membership system.

The six districts have their own nights away teams who assess those running nights away activities. The county role is ensuring that the assessments across the districts are consistent in quality and as such we have been working to bring our assessors together to learn and share their own experiences and challenges, providing an opportunity to learn and support one another.

In contrast, the county activities team look after all the assessments for all adventurous activity permits and the team have assessed and issued permits covering hillwalking, kayaking, winter mountaineering, skiing and more! The wide range of permits issued just shows how many amazing experiences young people across the County get to participate in.

The membership system has created some additional challenges for permits and nights away activities, however many have been resolved and others we are working on in the county to ensure that good communication and timely assessments can take place. As a result we are looking to grow the assessor teams to help support more leaders across the county obtain permits and take even more young people on adventures.





## International

The summer of 2024 saw a number of international trips taking place. A group of leaders and young people headed to Norway for a Roverway adventure as well as spending some time in Copenhagen, Denmark too before heading home. We also saw a contingent head out to the Iceland Jamboree, plus a number of groups supporting their own international trips and explorer units heading out on explorer belt expeditions.

Early in 2025, a group of 35 Scouts and leaders had a winter week at the Kandersteg International Scout Centre. Some of the Scouts learnt to ski whilst others improved their skiing skills plus everyone took part in evening sledging, a winter light trail and competing in their own winter Olympics.

In 2025 we have a unit heading out to the World Scout Moot in Portugal and plans are in place for a contingent of young people to attend the next Icelandic Jamboree in 2026.

Looking to the year ahead, we embark on the next World Scout Jamboree journey with the recruitment of a leadership team of four to take 36 young people to Poland in summer 2027 for the largest of international camps. Our unit will be looking to fundraise the full cost of the trip and so will be seen out and about across the county over the next couple of years in the lead up to the experience – keep your eye out for how you can support their journey!

## Events

**W**e have seen numerous events taking place over the last year.

Our Gang Show team delivered an amazing show at the Yolande Paterson Hall at St Helen and St Katharine school during February. The change in venue provided many challenges, however the whole team worked together and used the challenges to their advantage. The youth production team were incredible, supporting the show and helping to produce some amazing items, whilst the mini gang (6 and 7 year olds) stole the show as crayons. The show was an amazing showcase of the talent of our young people and truly illustrated our scouting values.

CPCW (County Patrol Camping Weekend) took place in October for Scouts across the County. Groups entered a team of four Scouts to compete and showcase their Scouting skills – from backwoods cooking, axe skills and tent pitching to creating their own team flags and participating in CPCW's Got Talent!

Our Explorers took part in RaidOx in November - a city wide treasurer hunt! With 50 questions released on Friday night the Explorer teams have the weekend to collect, locate, create and answer questions before delivering their answers Sunday with at least three of their team dressed appropriately – this year this meant as members of the Nintendo Mario family. To give you a flavour of the event, this years teams were asked to:

- Collect a Canadian Cucumber
- Collect a pedometer with between 9000 and 9050 steps recorded on it
- Take a selfie with 38 white mortar boards
- Film a 1 minute Yakka Dee with the topic of your Yakka being the word Tent
- Film your unit playing Family Fortunes
- Create a Happy National Buttons Day greeting card
- Make a paper mâché tortoise shell
- In men's football, what links two electrical firms, two airlines, a retailer, a financial service provider and a Scottish lager?

The more creative the team the better! How well do you think you could do?



## Good Service Awards

**W**e 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; providing unique opportunities to develop Skills for Life for Young People. However, there are some that are exceptional; having provided outstanding service for a number of years and going above and beyond their role for the benefit of Scouting. We acknowledge these volunteers with good service awards. The recipients over the past year are listed below. Our congratulations to them all!

### **Silver Wolf**

Service of the most exceptional nature  
Rarely awarded for less than 30 years service

Shaun Kendall  
Sheila Ultsch

### **Bar to the Silver Acorn**

Awarded for at least five years of further distinguished service

Alan Edwards

### **Silver Acorn**

Awarded for distinguished service of at least 20 years

Denise Shortman  
Ian Shortman  
Jane Titchener  
Katharine Adams  
Nigel Millward  
Rebecca Thomas

**Award for Merit**

Awarded for outstanding service of at least 10  
years

Adam Savory  
Andy Manprize  
Ben Smith  
David Jackson  
Janice Thompson  
John Mann  
Keith Church  
KT Turner  
Lorraine Crowther  
Matthew Shepherd  
Michael Ford  
Rhidian Williams  
Richard Ashby  
William Pitt

**Chief Scout's Commendation for Good Service**

Awarded for good service for more than 5 years,  
that stands out

Clare Cormack  
Elbert Loubser  
Huw Barrett  
James Wynne  
Janette Bell  
Jeanette Bell  
Jonathan Paulton  
Karen Jackson  
Karen Selway  
Kerry O'Callaghan  
Kerry O'Callaghan  
Kirsten Phips Get  
Libby Hawkness Smith  
Liz Ryall  
Mathew Ward  
Paul Ingrem  
Richard Dudley  
Sarah Nathanielsz  
Zach Goodhall



# Scouts

Oxfordshire

[www.oxonscouting.org.uk](http://www.oxonscouting.org.uk)

We are continuously looking to grow and strengthen our volunteer team – from section leaders to trustees – there is a role for everyone! If you, or someone you know, might be interested in helping with whatever time you have available, please do shout! We'd love to talk to you. It's not always easy, but it is fun and hugely rewarding!

