



**District Trustees Annual Report**

**to the**

**BRISTOL SOUTH DISTRICT SCOUT COUNCIL**

**for the year ended 31 March 2021**

**presented at the Annual General Meeting 30 July 2021**

# BRISTOL SOUTH DISTRICT SCOUT COUNCIL TRUSTEES ANNUAL REPORT YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2021

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The accounts for the financial year 2020-21 form a separate document to this report.

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## Status

The scout district was first registered with the Charity Commission on 22<sup>nd</sup> March 2002 under the charity number 1091301 on the merger of the Bristol SE and SW scout districts.

The charity is part of the Scout Association, located within the 'Scout County of Avon' and has the district registration number 16716.

## Trustees

Steve Williams	District Chairman
Scott Stowell	District Commissioner (until 31.12.2020)*
<i>Vacancy</i>	District Treasurer
Theresa Coll	District Secretary
Cathy Harding	Deputy District Commissioner*
Sam Beard	Assistant District Commissioner- Events (until 31.12.2020)
Gemma Francis	District Explorer Leader*
Nick Winter	District Explorer Scout Administrator*
Gary Turner	District Scouter
Beth Haines	District Youth Commissioner
James Wall	District Network Commissioner
Stephen Thomas	Executive Committee Member*
Tony Rees	Executive Committee Member*
Andy Morris	Executive Committee Member*

\*Indicates member of the Finance Sub Committee (Tony Rees acting Chairman).

## Principal Address

c/o. 45 Whitecross Avenue, Bristol, BS14 9JF

## Bankers

Lloyds Bank, Kingswood, Bristol PO Box 1000, BS1 6AH  
Virgin Media, Unit 1, Transom House, Victoria Street, BX1 1LT

## Bristol South District Website and e-mail Address

[www.bristolsouthscouts.org.uk](http://www.bristolsouthscouts.org.uk)      [bristolsouth@avonscouts.org.uk](mailto:bristolsouth@avonscouts.org.uk)

## Independent Financial Examiner

Russell Smith

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## **Structure, Governance and Management**

The district's governing documents and constitution are those of The Scout Association (TSA). These consist of Charter Royal, 1991 being the most recent, which in turn gives authority to the bye laws of the Association and The Policy, Organisation and Rules (POR) of The Scout Association. The district is a trust established under its rules, which are common to all Scouts. The trustees are appointed in accordance with the rules and policies contained in POR of The Scout Association.

The District Executive Committee (DEC) consisted of up to 13 members during the year, all of which are the charity trustees of the scout district, which is an educational charity, manages the district. 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.

The district operates under the model rules and constitution provided by The Scout Association under POR rule 4.25, as amended from time to time.

The DEC meets on average six times a year (by Zoom during the pandemic period restrictions), and exists to support the district leadership team in meeting the responsibilities of the appointments and is responsible for:

- The maintenance of district property
- The raising of funds and the administration of district finance
- The insurance of persons, property and equipment
- District public occasions
- Assisting in the recruitment of leaders and other adult support
- Appointing any sub committees that may be required
- Appointing district administrators and advisors other than those who are elected

The DEC is a member of the Small Charities Coalition, which exists to help promote good practise and operational procedure of smaller charities using forums, online learning and lobbies on behalf of this sector in general.

## **Objectives and Activities**

The objectives of the district are as a unit of the Scout Association. The Aim of The Scout Association is:

“To promote 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.”

“The method of achieving the aim of the Association is by providing an enjoyable and attractive scheme of progressive training, based on the Scout Promise and Law and guided by adult leadership.”

## **Public Benefit**

The district meets the Charity Commission's public benefit criteria under both the 'advancement of education' and the 'advancement of citizenship or community development' headings. Bristol south scout district 'catchment' covers the following postal code areas of south Bristol, though in some areas not exclusively BS1, BS3, BS4, BS13 and BS14.

## **Risk Assessment**

The District Executive Committee has identified the major risks to which they believe the district is exposed, these have been periodically reviewed and systems have established to mitigate against them. The principal areas of concern that have been identified are:

- Damage to the building, property and equipment.  
The district has sufficient buildings and contents insurance in place to mitigate against permanent loss, and in the event of temporary loss would request the use of buildings, property and equipment from neighbouring organisations such as the church, community centre and other scout groups, as a short-term solution.
- Injury to leaders, helpers, supporters and members.  
The district through the membership fees contributes to the Scout Association national accident insurance policy and has additional cover in place for occasional helpers. Risk Assessments are undertaken before all activities by the groups and units within the district.
- Reduction or loss of volunteers.  
The district is totally reliant upon volunteers to run and administer the activities of the district. If there were a reduction in the number of volunteers to an unacceptable level in a particular area then there would have to be a contraction, consolidation of activities or closure of parts of the district operations.

## **Financial Review**

Due to the nature of the district funding not being guaranteed to be consistent from one year to another the Reserves Policy is somewhat flexible in nature. In essence being sufficient funds to continue to pay non deferrable or fixed debts/costs for a period of three years without funding being received from the usual income streams. This usually amounts to being in the region of £12k.

Funds are also allocated in addition to this for any possible costs associated with the vacation of the Eastwinds Scout Centre property, £20k and other activities funds are held in specific bank accounts separate from the general district account e.g. Jamboree fund, Explorer Scout fund and Gang Show fund. Funds held are regularly monitored to ensure that they do not become excessive and that are used to the widest possible benefit. However, opportunities to invest in local scouting during the 'pandemic period' and the availability of grant aid has meant that balances/reserves were at the end of the year under review much higher than usual or anticipated. A financial support package to groups and units within the district will be actioned from 2021-22 budgets, along with other activity 'subsidies' etc to reduce balances to reasonable levels.

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The district has adopted a low-risk strategy to the investment of its funds. All funds are held in Lloyds Bank Accounts and a Virgin Money deposit account. The district is continuing to reduce cash holdings, only now held by the Eastwinds manager, all other floats having been repaid.

The DEC regularly monitors the levels of bank balances and the interest rates received to ensure the district obtains maximum value and income from its banking arrangements. 2020 saw the commencement of a programme of severe rate cutting by banks, building societies etc. Funds have therefore been left in place to attract what income it can, however, this is much reduced on previous years.

The district has in place systems of internal controls that are designed to provide reasonable assurance against material mismanagement or loss; these include either two signatories (Cheques) or two approvals (BACs transfers) for all payments.

Further financial commentary along with the Independent Examiner's statement can be found on pages 9 & 10 of the annual accounts, 2020-21.

## Statement of Trustees Financial Responsibilities

The trustees are responsible for keeping proper accounting records which disclose, with reasonable accuracy at any time, the financial position of the district.

They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the district and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

The accounts have been drawn up on the receipts and payments basis and follow best practice as set out in the Statement of Recommended Practice "Accounting and Reporting by Charities."

## Additional Reporting Requirements

*Numbers at the end of each comment refers to The Charity Commission 'Additional Reporting Requirements' template.*

There were no 'serious' or notifiable incidents during the year under review. All processes are subject to review by the trustees (4&36).

Grant making is not the main way the charity fulfils its purposes. However, in this unprecedented year, refunds have been made and small grants made available within the scout district in addition to those usually considered e.g. hardship assistance. No funds were raised from the general public (5&10).

No funding was received as a payment for contracts with central or local government. However, six Covid relief grant payments were received from government paid by the local authority totalling £20717.36 as detailed in the annual accounts, page three, section A (11, 14, 15&16).

The charity does not have any trading subsidiaries, nor does it operate outside of England & Wales and has not received any overseas funding (17,20&27).

All the trustees are volunteers and as such not remunerated except for the payment of claimed expenses. There are no paid staff, thus no trustees have resigned to start paid appointments (29,31&32).

As a young person's charity, all volunteers including trustees are subject to a DBS check prior to appointment, which is reviewed upon positional changes and after five years. This service is provided centrally by The Scout Association via its approved contractor. Trustee details are recorded and shown on The Charity Commission portal (37&41).

### **Achievements and Performance**

#### **Scott Stowell – District Commissioner (until 31.12.2020).**

This year has been a year like no other for the world and Bristol South Scouts volunteers have work tirelessly to keep scouting alive in the south of Bristol, volunteers having to completely amend their normal working practises of scouting being predominately a charity providing outdoor/face to face activities to being mainly online or delivered home activity packs for the majority of the year. Whilst regularly scheduled activities and events have had to have been postponed and cancelled, these will be taken forward when restrictions finally permit these to take place.

Our volunteers have embraced new ways of delivering Scouting as well as meeting as volunteers by using technology such as Zoom. This has supported the efforts to ensure scouting continued for young people but also the infrastructure of scouting was able to function and flourish.

The Bristol South Scout district has supported all groups to embrace the changes in scouting to ensure that face to face scouting bounces back and thrives once the pandemic is over. Covid 19 has been tough for people in their own personal lives, a testimony to their character and resolve being that the majority have continued to provide support as a volunteer to their local community, even when their own personal circumstances have been challenging. The pandemic has taught us new skills and will only strengthen how we operate as a charity in the future.

We successfully held our AGM last year on Zoom with everyone getting the opportunity to attend so that we could share our progress to date. We also held another thank you event in 2020, this time with a twist in that it was also online. We had over 60 volunteers attend the event where we shared our top awards as well as local thank you awards for our amazing leaders and volunteers.

We have also taken this opportunity to further our connection with our volunteers over social media and we updated our website to better support our members as much as possible.

It has been a tough year for everyone but scouting in Bristol South has pulled through, all down to our outstanding volunteers.

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## Steve Williams – District Chairman

My report this year starts similarly to last year's report in commenting on what a strange and different and sometimes difficult year it has been to that of a normal year in the life of scouting. Last year I reflected on the resignation of our District Commissioner (DC) which hopefully was not attributed to myself. On my second year in office, we are now on our third DC, so on reflection perhaps my days as District Chair are now numbered.

I would like to express my thanks to Isabelle Mills for standing into the breach for her short tenure as 'caretaker' DC, who together with her other county roles in scouting took time out to help and assist the district in the period of AS (After Scott) and thank her for all her help and support. We now have our newly appointed DC in place and a very warm welcome is extended to Paul Harper in his new position and the Board of Trustees look forward to supporting Paul in the coming months as we (hopefully) return to what most of us refer to as the "new normal."

Although, it has been a quite year in terms of meeting up with everyone face to face, I know many of you have been working behind the scenes in maintaining scouting both at group, unit, district and Group Executive level through the periods of ever rapidly changing regulations – Who would of thought that traffic lights would control, if, where, when and how scouting would, or even could, be conducted. My extreme admiration must go to Group Scout Leaders and all uniformed leaders for their diversity and ingenuity in continuing to bring scouting to many of our members during the last 12-month period.

I make no apology for using the analogy of a good scout leader resembling a swimming swan. On the surface the swan glides majestically and calmly across the water creating nothing but gentle ripples in its wake, while underneath it is paddling like mad with its legs to keep the smooth motion going. (*Sounds like a typical section meeting I hear some of you cry!*) Scout leaders just like the swans are always cool and calm on the surface but working furiously underneath to ensure that the direction, drive and decision making continues – with consistency, no matter the challenge ahead for the betterment of all the young people in Scouting.

I would also like to express to all members of executive committees (or trustees as we now refer to them) either at group or district level my grateful thanks for all your continued collaboration with the uniform leadership teams in providing the much-needed support and encouragement we have all needed over the last 12 months.

At a district level I would like to express again, my thanks to Tony Rees for all his hard work heading up our finance sub-committee and for the help and assistance to groups within the district with advice and help regarding available national and local grants and funding opportunities. Not to forget the endless work he does on our social media Facebook page and district website. Also, my gratitude to Andrew Morris, our former District Chair, who has decided to stand down as a trustee from the district board of trustees. Our sincere thanks for your years of commitment and we wish you every success for the future.

As we all personally begin to recover from the last 12 months of restrictions and limitations, I wish you every success and pledge that any support we can offer please remember we are only a phone call or an email away. In the words of Bear Grylls

**“So much of who we are as an adult is formed when we are kids.  
What scouting says to people is - It's ok to go for it in life!”**



## **Plans for the Coming Year**

### **Paul Harper – District Commissioner (wef 1.4.2021)**

In April 2021 I took over from the ‘caretaker’ Interim DC Isabelle Mills (1.1.2021 to 31.3.2021) as District Commissioner. I have a clear remit to ensure scouting is ready to take advantage of the opportunities available to young people as the world opens up for camping and other exciting scouting opportunities.

Despite the pandemic, the fact we were able to retain so many leaders and young people, demonstrates resilience and an appetite for scouting. At the annual census (January) the number of young people aged 6-18 was 18% down on the previous census at 1004 and adults was down 16% (171 were leaders) to 307.

I also aim to strengthen the district leadership team and establish a clear direction for the future. One of my first acts was to maintain continuity by appointing Scott Stowell and Cathy Harding as DDCs to help us build the district leadership team of the future. Scott and Cathy both know the district well and are well positioned to advise me how we can make meaningful progress without undermining the things that made us so successful. I thank them for agreeing to help me.

I am also delighted to be supported by a mix of old and new faces. As someone new to the DC role it gave me great confidence to see such a strong support structure within the district with an active Board of Trustees, Scout Active Support section and Appointments sub committee all focused on ensuring our young people receive the best scouting they possibly can. Thanks one and all.

Taking over as DC ‘after’ a pandemic is exciting but also not to be underestimated. Much has changed and we have lost a number of stalwart leaders and adult volunteers over the past year. Others have chosen to step back or found other interests, passing on the batten to the next generation. We thank all who served us in the past as well as those who continue to do so. A matter of great concern to me is the number of young people unable to access scouting in our district, we also lost an Explorer Scout Unit (Pegasus) due to a combination of factors not just the pandemic.

Based on the data provided in the last census, there are 212 young people in beavers, cubs and scouts on waiting lists in our district. Anecdotal information suggests that number is currently rising and also the number of our leaders might be overstretched, often wearing several “hats” within their groups. We need to find a way of supporting those who need it while attracting a new generation of adult volunteers to help us progress. The latest national scouting slogan is “Volunteering is Good for you” and it is true. There is a role in scouting for everyone, uniformed and behind the scenes.

If we can take care of our leaders, giving them the life opportunities they value, they will ensure an even greater number of young people acquire the unique skills for life that scouting offers. I look forward to a year of recovery and as we re-establish face to face scouting for our members.

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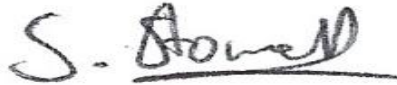
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**Declaration**

The trustees declare that they have approved the Trustees Report above. Signed on behalf of the Charity's Trustees by:



**Steve Williams** - Chairman



**Scott Stowell** - District Commissioner (until 31.12.2020).

Date: 29<sup>th</sup> June 2021