



**District Trustees Annual Report**

**to the**

**BRISTOL SOUTH DISTRICT SCOUT COUNCIL**

**for the year ended 31 March 2025**

**presented at the Annual General Meeting  
15<sup>th</sup> July 2025**

**BRISTOL SOUTH DISTRICT SCOUT COUNCIL  
TRUSTEES ANNUAL REPORT  
YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025**

---

<b>Contents</b>	<b>Pages</b>
Reference and Administrative Information	1
Structure, Governance and Management Objectives and Activities	2
Public Benefit Risk Assessment Financial Review Statement of Trustees Responsibilities	3
Additional Reporting Requirements	4
District Accounts* Commentary	5
Achievements and Performance 2024-25 James Blackmore & Ben Wherrett, District Lead Volunteers	6
Steve Williams – District Chair, Board of Trustees	9
Declaration	10

\*The accounts for the fiscal year 2024-25 and Independent Examine Statement form a separate document to this report.

# BRISTOL SOUTH DISTRICT SOUTH COUNCIL TRUSTEES ANNUAL REPORT YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025

---

## Status

The scout district was first registered with the Charity Commission (England & Wales) 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.

## District Trustees during 2024-25

Steve Williams	District Chair	(A)
Tony Rees	District Treasurer	(A)
James Blackmore	District Lead Volunteer*	(X)
Vacancy	District Youth Lead	(X)
Cathy Harding		(A)
Jessica Tulit		(A)
Ian Chalmers	[resigned during the year under review]	(A)
Nick Winter		(A)
Aaron Wheatley		(A)
Paul Harper		(A)

Two places were vacant during the year. There were no co-options to the Board of Trustees during the year under review.

Note: Trustee categories have changed in line with the Scout Association's Transformation programme. This resulted in Trustees being 'Appointed' (A) with only two Ex-officio positions, that of District Lead Volunteer [formerly DC] and District Youth Lead (X)

\*Whilst we do have two DLVs only one is required to be recorded

## Principal Address

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

## Bankers

Lloyds Bank, Kingswood, Bristol PO Box 1000, BS1 6AH

## Bristol South District Website and e-mail Address

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

[contact@bristolsouthscouts.org.uk](mailto:contact@bristolsouthscouts.org.uk)

## Independent Financial Examiner

Emily Reeve

## **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 Board of Trustees (BOT) consisted of up to 12 members during the year, which as 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 (England & Wales) as appropriate.

The district operates under the model rules and constitution provided by The Scout Association under POR rule 5 and subsections, as amended from time to time and with due regard and implementation of national policies, including, but not limited to, equal opportunities/equality, privacy and data protection, safeguarding and anti-bullying, safety and vetting.

The BOT meets on average six times a year (also by Zoom if circumstances dictate), 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
- Appointing any sub committees that may be required
- Providing general oversight and management where appropriate

As progress is made towards the full implementation of the 'Transformation' programme elements of BOT activity may be subject to further change.

## **Purpose, Objectives and Activities**

The purpose of Scouting is to actively encourage and support young people in their personal development, empowering them to make a positive contribution to society.

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. Whilst membership, both young people and adult volunteer, is principally drawn from these areas, activities are not confined to these locations.

## **Risk Assessment**

The DEC/BOT 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 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 £20k.

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. Opportunities to invest in local scouting post 'pandemic period' are returning and new ones identified. A financial support package to groups and units within the district to attend activities was actioned from the 2023-24 budgets, this continued in 2024-25 along with other activity subsidies and grants etc to reduce balances to reasonable levels, within three to five years. "Spending wisely for greatest benefit not in haste".

The district is registered with HMRC for Gift Aid, £788.57 being claimed in 2024-25. This figure is set to rise annually.

# BRISTOL SOUTH DISTRICT SOUTH COUNCIL TRUSTEES ANNUAL REPORT YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025

---

The district has adopted a low-risk strategy to the investment of its funds. All funds are held in Lloyds Bank Accounts, some interest bearing, yielding £1.5k interest in the year. The district continues to reduce cash holdings, only now held by the Eastwinds Manager.

The BOT 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.

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 or two online approvals for payments.

## Statement of Trustees Financial Responsibilities

The trustees are responsible for ensuring the keeping of proper accounting records which disclose, with reasonable accuracy at any time, the financial position of the district and forecasting outturn during the year enabling financial provisions to be planned with a degree of certainty.

Trustees 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 Required Reporting

There were no 'serious' or notifiable local incidents during the year under review. All processes are subject to review by the trustees.

Grant making is not the main way the charity fulfils its purposes. However, in these times, refunds have been made and small grants made available within the scout district in addition to those usually considered e.g. hardship assistance. There was no fundraising from the general public.

No funding was received as a payment for contracts with central or local government.

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

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.

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 or sooner if circumstances require. This service along with others e.g. mandatory safeguarding and safety training is provided centrally by The Scout Association or via its approved contractor. Trustee details are recorded and shown on The Charity Commission portal.

# BRISTOL SOUTH DISTRICT SOUTH COUNCIL TRUSTEES ANNUAL REPORT YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025

---

## District Accounts Commentary 2024-2025

As the total district income is less than £250k the accounts are in a Receipts and Payments format as per The Charity Commission requirements and subject to an Independent Examination rather than a full audit.

As usual the district finishes the review period in an apparently cash rich situation, however, this is not totally by design. The trustees agreed to a negative budget for the year under review publicising the availability of grants, loans and support for activities to groups and units but the anticipated take up was in fact lower than anticipated for the second year running, plus the closure of a scout group brought an unanticipated boost to funds near to the end of the financial year.

Until the effective use of funds can be made a sizeable proportion of account balances have been placed in a selection of interest-bearing accounts so that some gain is made from this until future expenditures are identified and made. Interest rates are again dropping so returns are not very high. Funds are still quickly accessible to make payments and/or assist groups and units. The trustees again reaffirmed that it would not be prudent management to spend just for spending's sake to reduce balances to the agreed reserved levels, which may need revaluation as costs continue to increase across the board. Gift Aid continues to be claimed although this could be expanded.

At the beginning of the year under review the trustees agreed that there would be a district membership levy of a nominal £1 per young person, however, with the implementation by scout headquarters of a very substantial increase in the national membership charge it was agreed to cancel the re-introduction of the district levy thus keeping a little more funds in groups and units accounts. This has not detrimentally impacted the district's financial position.

Actions commenced last year included the reduction or write off of badge stocks and band equipment and also the reserves allocations remain at previously set levels.

As I stand down as treasurer and trustee, I am confident the district remains in a financially stable position. "And Finally" my ongoing sincere thanks to all those signatories and examiners who have supported the operation of the district's finances over the years.

**Tony Rees**  
District Trustee formerly Finance Team latterly Treasurer  
2013-2025

# BRISTOL SOUTH DISTRICT SOUTH COUNCIL TRUSTEES ANNUAL REPORT YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025

---

## Achievements and Performance – Ben Wherrett & James Blackmore – joint DLVs

Thank you to everyone for attending tonight. This report covers the Scout year from April 2024 to March 2025.

### Membership

Scouting is going well in Bristol South. The 2025 Census shows there are 1192 young people involved in Scouting in Bristol South. This is a 6% reduction on 1265 in the previous year. All our sections are slightly down on last year apart from Young Leaders, which has risen by 10%. However, group/unit numbers are stable and many have waiting lists of those interested with demand for Scouting is still outstripping supply. Last January we had 493 young people on our waiting list, this year it was 427, so volunteer [leader] recruitment is still crucial. Most importantly, however, numbers are extremely good following pre-pandemic levels which were just over 1000. Congratulations to all our volunteers. In a year when there has been so much change at Group Lead Volunteer level, this is a fantastic result.

### Squirrels

We now have two established Squirrel Dreys at 11th Bristol Air Scout Group and Windmill Hill Scout Group. Demand is high so as further Groups decide to take the plunge and set up a Drey, we now have some experts who can help. Hopefully more dreys will be set up in the near future.

### Redcliffe Beavers (supported by 255th Channel Sea Scouts)

As an attempt to offer Scouting in the inner City, we are pleased to be trialling the new Redcliffe Beaver Colony which is being supported by 255th (Channel) Sea Scout Group. It has been an interesting challenge, but I am delighted to announce the Group has 15 young people invested but also a number of volunteers undergoing their training. There have been recent discussions about opening a cub pack there as the next step in bringing Scouting to all.

### Activities

Activities have been incredible this year with a wide spectrum of experiences being thought of and offered. We are truly amazed by some of the activities being held. Last year we had over 1500 young people on activities and over 1200 night-away experiences. This is thanks to the amazing volunteers whose time, planning, ingenuity and thoughtfulness have made this all possible.

### 14-24 Units

Our 14-24 units have gone from strength to strength with both explorer units increasing in size. From backwoods cooking to scuba diving sessions as well as the Monopoly Run and Rickard Shield, with Spinnaker taking to the water more than ever. Our young people have certainly been increasing their list of experiences. With a focus on youth-led programmes it is now up to the explorers themselves to produce ideas and to lead some of the nights within a term. This helps to improve the quality of Scouting further down the younger sections as both units have a large number of Young Leaders.

### **14-25 Units (continued)**

Spinnaker SESU is also a part of the test phase for the national revamp of Explorer units from HQ trialling new badges such as a revamped cooking badge along with climbing and more to come next term.

Young Leaders with Dan, Anne and Scott at the helm have been meeting regularly. Teaching our next generation of volunteers all the skills they need to become successful lead volunteers. At 76 YLs we have more than ever across all our groups.

Duke of Edinburgh's Awards team, under the guidance of Tim, Ross, Rob and Tracey we have an excellent team helping our young people achieve with four explorers achieving silver last year and this year seven explorers will hopefully achieve bronze and five explorers gold, fingers crossed for them.

The Gert Lush Network is now well and truly active again with new members invested a few weeks ago helping to form our oldest section, of which most are volunteers within Bristol South as well.

### **Strengthening Our Group Structure**

Our Scouting depends on our volunteers, who give thousands of hours to ensure our young people gain skills for life. So, our focus this year, as a district, was to support Groups, ensuring they have the right people in the right roles. We have focused on GSL/GLVs to attract, motivate and support your team of adult volunteers and to train and support our team leads. Many members of the district team cover a number of roles and of course some of us volunteer in Groups as well. While we still aim to visit every Group, we have often needed to focus on where extra support was required or requested. At Group level, the key to growth area is to have an inspirational Group Lead Volunteer to support each section. Hence the focus is on appointing new GLV/GSLs and utilising strong groups to support others in need of mentoring.

Over the year we ran a series of training events for the GLVs and District Team members of tomorrow and helped them with getting to grips with the new systems. This enabled us to identify and train the next generation of GLVs and District Team. We have supported the appointment of 4 Group Scout Leaders/ Group Lead volunteers.

Our most recent appointment is Roger who has recently taken up the post of what was known as DESC, this is now 14-24 Team Lead. He has been doing an excellent job of shepherding our revitalised Network and supporting our ESU's. With big plans for the coming year, we need to create stronger links between units and groups.

### **Transformation**

2024 was all about transformation from the lead up to the roll out, it was a confusing time for all. But through demanding work and many hours we have gotten to grips with the new system known as 'my membership'. It has been great to see many people on zoom calls with HQ and attend training sessions run by Scott. Most people have now logged in to see what it is like. It has allowed for the streamlining of Nights Away Notifications for easier permit applications and a more central hub for information and communication.

A small sidenote, please could I ask for those that have not signed the online declaration or filled in their profile out to do so please as soon as possible.

### **Gang Show – February 2025**

This year's spectacular show had the biggest cast and more young people than ever before. The County Lead volunteer, County Chair, Girl Guides Bristol SW Divisional Commissioner and around 700 people were treated to an excellent show with singing, dancing and comedy. It is also a great advert to other Scouts with visits from representatives of Gang Shows from all over the country, including Manchester! If you would like to be part of this amazing show next year, watch out for next year's auditions. Every Cub, Scout, Explorer, Network, Brownie and Girl Guide members are welcome, adult volunteers as well! Rehearsals are on Sunday afternoons and transport is available from some Scout HQs.

### **District Lead Volunteer Team**

With last year's AGM we had only just taken over our DLV roles. More than a year in now, where has the time gone! We have spent many hours working on issues within the district. Our aim is to ensure that excellent Scouting happens for all our young people and volunteers alike. We have had many challenges including HQs subsiding, new planning permissions, and lease agreements along with new training modules and not to mention a whole new way of Scouting. We have had a number of GLVs step down with new volunteers coming in.

Unfortunately, the difficult decision was made to close the Knowle West Sscout Group due to numerous factors. Since taking over it has been an interesting ride, but we both now feel we are getting to grips with the task. We would like to thank Teresa immensely, Nick, Steve, Tony, Roger, Arthur and anybody who we have missed. One thing that has happened since transition is the DLV/DMT team is a lot more compact – we feel we are one team. Note a lack of ladies on this team, so please feel free to step forward we always need extra help.

### **View for the future**

We have decided to focus on linking our district together with a focus on holding a district wide event as well as holding the Pinewood derby and increasing links from Scout sections to Explorer units.

Sincerest thanks to all volunteers who contribute to giving the young people in our Groups, Units and District 'Skills For Life'.

### **Ben & James**

# BRISTOL SOUTH DISTRICT SOUTH COUNCIL TRUSTEES ANNUAL REPORT YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025

## District Chairman's Report 2025 – Steve Williams



Dear Fellow Scout Volunteers

It always seems strange to me that we reflect on our past scouting year in April, especially when many of us are still working through this current year's programme. However, no matter how our Scouting life is at the present, it does cause us to stop and reflect and think about the highs and lows of our previous financial year in our Scouting life.

As some of you are aware I will be stepping down as district chair as of this year's District Annual General Meeting and therefore my reflection goes back over the time I have been in the role as your District Chair.

Since taking on the role in 2019 our District has endured a number of changes. The change of four different DC's/DLV's. Also not forgetting the challenges we all faced during the Covid pandemic not only in our Scouting lives but our personal lives as well.

More recently we have had to contend with changes to the structure of scouting both as Board of Trustees and as Leadership Teams with changes in responsibilities and coming to terms with a completely new online database and the issues and the uncertainties that this has sometimes caused. Adult Training is now emphasized as Learning with much of the this now carried out as online modules.

I think it is safe say no one likes, or always welcomes, change, but change is inevitable. It is because of change that Scouting has developed and changed over its 116 years and has adapted so it is still current and relevant in the lives of all of us and our young members today. What volunteer would wish to go back to pre OSM days when subscriptions and members badge progress had to maintained manually in ledgers, notebooks and sometimes written on the back of your hand.

Many things have changed in Scouting since Lord Robert Baden-Powell said

***"I have over and over again explained that the purpose of the Boy Scout and Girl Guide Movement is to build men and women as citizens endowed with the three H's namely, Health, Happiness and Helpfulness. The man or woman who succeeds in developing these three attributes has secured the main steps to success in this Life. "***



However, regardless of the changes we endure in Scouting, what has not change is the devotion, dedication and commitment of Scout volunteers to provide the very best for their members in ensuring the memories they build whilst in Scouts have a lasting effect on the rest of their lives.

It is my hope that whilst serving on the District Board of Trustees we have helped our groups and units to help achieve those goals.

**BRISTOL SOUTH DISTRICT SOUTH COUNCIL  
TRUSTEES ANNUAL REPORT  
YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025**

---

In conclusion I would like to express by sincere thanks to all those Trustees I have had the privilege to serve with over my tenure with special thanks to Tony Rees whose help and support during my time on the DBOT has been invaluable.

And always remember "***There's more to life than Scouts but it's a great place to start.***"

Yours in Scouting

**Steve**

**Declaration**

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



**Steve Williams** – Chair, Board of Trustees 2024-25



**James Blackmore** – Co-District Lead Volunteer 2024-25

Date: 17<sup>th</sup> June 2025