

5th Dunstable (Methodist) Scout Group
Minutes of the Group Scout Council Annual General Meeting
19th June 2024 at 1st Leighton Buzzard Scout Hut

1. Introduction and welcome

The Chair welcomed everyone, and thanked them for attending the meeting. He then introduced himself (Nick Porter) as Chair, Helen Charters as Treasurer, Jenny Ryder-O'Regan as Group Lead Volunteer. He also explained that Sue Gibson, (not present) was the Group Secretary, but this post has been abolished by the Scout Association. He thanked Sue Porter for stepping in to take this evening's minutes.

The Chair also explained the revised terminology introduced by The Scout Association, as follows:

The **Group Scout Council** consists (broadly) of every adult associated with the group. This includes leaders and their helpers, parents or guardians of Squirrels, Beavers, Cubs and Scouts, and the Patrol Leaders of the Scout Troop. That's pretty well everyone in this room.

The **Group Trustee Board** consists of a Chair, Secretary, Treasurer and the Group Scout Leader, together with the Section Leaders, and 'lay' members elected by you, the Group Scout Council. The GTB is responsible for ensuring that the Scout Group is properly managed and adheres to all regulations.

2. Apologies for absence

Apologies had been received from Sue Gibson, Dave Gibson, Jeanette Betterton, Sarah White, Jonathan Charters, Phillis Isted-Phillips, Leona Sydney and Brian Calvert.

In attendance: Nick Porter, Jenny Ryder-O'Regan, Helen Charters, David Betterton, Jean Basham, Darren Mackintosh, Jana Veyres, Chris Veyres, Russell Sage, Kieran Pritchard, Bianca Chele, Claire Seath, Samantha Messenger, Sadie Martin, Agnieszka Sajda, Matthew Slade-Pedrick, Julie Vickery, Ian Vickery. Sue Porter, taking minutes, is not a GSC member.

3. To approve the minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on 5 July 2023

The Chair explained that the minutes of the previous AGM had been examined by the Group Executive, and proposed that they are accepted as a true record.

Seconded by Jana Veyres, and approved by a show of hands.

4. Governance topics

The Chair explained that the following are part of the standard AGM format recommended by The Scout Organisation to ensure good practice is followed.

a. Adopt the model constitution from Policy, Organisation and Rules

The Scout Association has provided a standard form of Constitution, as part of its "Policy Organisation and Rules" document, and this was adopted as the constitution of the 5th Dunstable (Methodist) Scout Group at the previous AGM. The GTB proposes not to change this.

Seconded by Russell Sage, and approved by a show of hands.

b. Note the Group's financial year

The Scout Association is registered charity number 306101.

The 5th Dunstable (Methodist) Scout Group is one part of that association, and provides activities for young people in Dunstable aged between 6 and 14 years. All of the work of the 5th Dunstable Scout Group, including activities with the young people, and fundraising events, is performed by unpaid volunteers.

The Group's financial year runs from 1 January to 31 December

c. Agree the number of members that may be elected to the Trustee Board

The Chair proposed that up to six Group Trustee Board members may be elected by the Group Scout Council.

Seconded by Helen Charters, and approved by a show of hands.

d. Agree the quorum for future Group Scout Council meetings

This was set at by previous AGM at 15 members, and the GTB proposes to keep this unchanged.

Seconded by Jenny Ryder-O'Regan, and approved by show of hands.

5. Review of the previous year

a. The Group Lead Volunteer's review of Scouting in 5th Dunstable Scout Group

The group continues to run successfully, with four sections: Squirrels (4-6 years), Beavers (6-8), Cubs (8-10½), and Scouts (10½-14). After 14, our Scouts leave our group, and can join Explorers (14-18) and Network (18-25), run by Dunstable District.

Most of our membership numbers are lower than in previous years, and experience common to other groups in the district. However, Squirrels has grown from its startup membership of 8 last year, to 12 this year, with a waiting list that is far too long!

We were able to run our annual jumble sale again this year. Some of you will know what a huge undertaking this is, consuming many volunteer hours. But its success means that we have been able to keep subscriptions low, keep our equipment well maintained, and heavily subsidise camps and other events. Our profit was lower this year, as a result of some difficulties in disposal of surplus, and a somewhat reduced level of stock collected.

As well as the jumble sale, there are a couple of other ways we can raise additional funds. One is through Gift Aid: many people have completed a Gift Aid entitlement form, which allows us to claim money back from the government. However, some of our parents have not done this, and this is a valuable source of revenue lost to us.

The second is EasyFundraising, which gives us a small donation every time one of our supporters shops online. There are around 2000 online retailers in the scheme, from Amazon through Argos, all the way to the other end of the alphabet! Even some holiday companies are there, so if you are lucky enough to take a £3000 holiday, we could be getting 1% of that - £30, and all without costing you a penny. Check out EasyFundraising online.

None of the above would be possible without our volunteers. Every adult you come across in Scouting is a volunteer, who fits scouting around work, family and other commitments. Those of you with young people in Cubs and Scouts will know that it is largely the same team running both of those sections – no small feat after a full day at work. So special thanks to Hannah, Harry and Poppy for their efforts.

While we understand that a weekly commitment, or indeed being surrounded by 36 boisterous children is not for everyone, there are many things that need doing behind the scenes. Whatever you can do to help will be greatly appreciated, and the more people we have on board, the easier it is for everyone. What's more, it's been shown that volunteering is good for your health and happiness.

A letter will shortly be sent out, asking how you can help the group – a bit of admin at home, collecting badges from the scout shop, setting up camp, or demonstrating your hobby to a group of young people. Please do fill in the form, either on paper or online.

Finally, we must record our thanks, firstly to the Methodist Church where we meet, for their continued support. Then to all our volunteers: the Trustee Board; the adults and young leaders who run the sections, and to all those others who support us through the year to make things happen.

b. To receive and consider the Annual Report of the Group Trustee Board including the annual Statement of the Accounts

The Treasurer presented a summary of the accounts, in particular explaining that the deficit in 2023 has been largely due to the after-effects of Covid, and the consequent reduction in membership. Despite this, we remain in a healthy financial state, and are taking steps to ensure that we do not continue to run at a deficit.

6. Making appointments

a. To approve the Group Scout Leader's nomination of the Group Chair

The Group Scout Leader nominated Nick Porter to remain as Chair, and this was approved by a show of hands.

b. Election of the Group Treasurer

Helen Charters has been proposed and seconded as Treasurer. With no other nominations, this was approved by a show of hands.

c. Elections of members to the Group Trustee Board

The following have been proposed and seconded to serve as members of the Group Trustee Board:

Ian Ellis
Russell Sage
Dave Gibson
Steve Clarke
Jean Basham

These were approved by a show of hands

The Chair thanked all members of the Group Trustee Board for their service over the last year, and for their continuing service into the. It was clarified that elections to the GTB are now for a period of up to three years, and therefore elections at upcoming AGMs will only be necessary to replace any departing members.

7. To appoint the Scrutineer

The GLV clarified that Rachel Martin, who had been appointed at last year's AGM as scrutineer for the 2023 accounts, had left before being able to fulfil that role. The GTB appointed Jan Powley as a replacement, and propose that she is also appointed for the coming year. This was approved by a show of hands.

8. Close

With thanks to all in attendance, the Chair declared the meeting closed.