

**MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
OF THE SUFFOLK COUNTY SCOUT COUNCIL
On-line Meeting via ZOOM (due to COVID-19 Restrictions)**

Thursday 26th November 2020 at 7.45pm

PRESENT:

Graham Woolley (Regional Commissioner for the East of England), County Chair, County Commissioner, County Treasurer and Members of the County Scout Council (as per Constitution).

Bury	District Commissioner,
Deben	District Commissioner,
Lowestoft	District Commissioner
Orwell	District Commissioner,
Stowmarket	District Commissioner
Sudbury	District Commissioner
Waveney	District Commissioner.
Wolsey	District Commissioner

1. The meeting opened with Peter Jones, County Chair, welcoming everyone to the virtual meeting this year and limited to the County Scout Council members who had all been invited. It is also the first one held under the new constitution which was approved a few weeks ago. He paid tribute to Rodney Turner, Peter Jarvis and Keith Barber for constructing it and reminded that it would require tweaking during the next year. The meeting was confirmed as quorate with 48 members in attendance.
2. The **Thoughts for the Meeting** were given by the County Commissioner, Mark Pearson.
 - The most easily understood language is a smile – even to a stranger.
 - None of us are perfect, but every single one of us are good and necessary.
3. Apologies for absence had been received from – Lady Clare, Countess of Euston (County President), Gordon Biden, John Ineson, Colin Elsdon, Peter Jarvis, Andy Tucker, Graham Baker, Sarah Britten, Stephen Thorn, Ann Robertson, Paul Goffin, Alison Barber, Steve Challis, Jake Dixon
4. The result of the Executive Committee Vacancies for Young Members was announced as follows
 - a) Keri John
 - b) Dan Jackson
5. **The minutes of the previous County Annual General Meeting** held at the Hallowtree Activity Centre, Nacton, Ipswich, on the 26th September 2019 **were approved.**

6. Annual Report & Accounts 2019/20:

Mark Pearson, County Commissioner introduced the Annual Report

I would like to say to all the members of Suffolk Scouts here tonight and to all our volunteers, thank you for the brilliant Scouting that you've carried out during 2019-2020 and into these taxing times. I spent the first few months in consultation to develop our Suffolk Strategy. Our report this year shows the wide range of activities we have undertaken especially through CMAT (including Kinlochleven in Scotland) a strong uptake in water activities (including Wet Weekend and Adventures Offshore), increased use of Bradfield and of course internationally the World Jamboree and two trips to Kandersteg.

Membership slightly declined but we have made great progress on mandatory training. Our sectional ACCs came on board towards the end of the financial review to fill vacancies and have since undertaken many activities including the #AdventureContinues. Their full reports will appear in next years review. Despite this, we achieved a record 64 Duke of Edinburgh awards and have a further 100 in the pipeline, thank you! A great achievement by our young people under the guidance of great volunteers such as yourselves. And with the oncoming launch of the You-Shaped Award, we are certainly giving young people the opportunity to develop their Skill for Life.

No questions were asked about the report

John Emin, County Treasurer commented on the accounts as follows:

The year to March 2020 initially was one of high activity and excitement with various organising committees working hard to deliver events for our young people.

This was evidenced by another significant increase in turnover to £399k (2019 - £181k) primarily, but by no means solely, driven by income collected for The European Jamboree. Sadly, and to the immense disappointment of us all Covid -19 has meant that this fabulous event, and many others, have now been cancelled and we will see the reverse effects of this in next years reports as insurance claims are made and refunds made. Cost associated with these event activities broadly matched income as the general business of paying for the events took place.

At County level, our net income from membership fees increased slightly to £44k (£42k) due to an increase in membership fee. Our overall costs for the year came to approx. £41k leaving a small surplus.

The balance sheet as at 31st March 2020 shows a small decrease in Net Asset position to £345k (£355k). This was due to the events teams spending slightly more on their respective activities than they collected. The bank and cash balances shown of £288k do not solely belong to County in the form of free reserves, I thought it might be helpful to break down this figure to its constituent parts as follows:-

- Bradfield Campsite - £18k
- Jamboree Fund - £6k
- Explore Belt - £3k
- Water Activities - £14k
- Africa Fund - £9k
- Region - £9k
- Climbing Fund - £13k
- Lackford – £34k (includes Ardeche trip activity)
- Moot - £5k
- European Jamboree - £24k
- Other funds and bequests - £14k
- County - £139k (of which £66k was membership fees due to HQ)

Outlook for 2021/22

With so many uncertainties around the return to ‘normal’ activities next year it’s almost impossible to predict with certainty what our membership will look like when the census comes around again in January. We do however know that HQ, who are battling well-publicised financial concerns of their own, have increased their annual membership fee by 26% equating to an extra £7.50 per young member. As a newcomer to scouting and membership organisations in general I am thankful to our District Treasurers and Chairs who so clearly helped me to understand the importance of managing the expectation and experience of parents next year when we ask them to renew and pay membership once again. With this in mind, County has agreed to halve its membership contribution next year by 50% in order to assist in a countywide effort to try and shield parents from this increase in fee. In addition, we have also agreed to establish a hardship fund to help and groups who may not be able to provide scouting over the coming period, for financial reasons.

Additional thanks to Ian Brookman, our accounts Examiner, for once again producing the financial report.

No questions were asked about the report.

7. The County Commissioner’s nomination for County Chairman, Peter Jones, was **approved unanimously**. Peter thanked the Executive for their continued support.
8. Election of the County Secretary and County Treasurer,
 - a. The Honorary County Secretary – Carl Gloess - **unanimously elected**.
 - b. The Honorary County Treasurer – Jon Emin = **unanimously elected**.

The Chair commented that the County Executive has increased the number of meetings that it has held since March 2020. Traditionally, it has met quarterly at Hallowtree and face-to-face. Confronted by the unprecedented challenges posed by lockdown and a variety of items of guidance from The Scout Association, the County Executive has met around ten times in 2020, via on line meetings, usually of 90 minutes duration. He believed that the County Executive has worked well in the past several years in looking after the best interests of Scouting in Suffolk.

9. The County Commissioner’s nominated members of the County Executive were **approved unanimously**.
Rodney Turner Emma Scholey Selina Noton

10. The following people were elected to sit on the County Executive Committee (proposed by Brian Roe, Seconded by Richard Beeby) and **confirmed unanimously**.

Colin Winter Matthew Gilbert Keith Barber Keri John Dan Jackson

The Chair then noted that completion of the membership of the County Executive Committee, the new County Executive has the right of nomination of qualifying persons as **Co-opted Members**. Traditionally, such names have been announced at the County AGM. Under the new Constitution, these names will be recommended to the County Executive Committee at its first meeting following the AGM, to be held in December. Additional co-opted members may be co-opted if a need is identified during the year. The number of co-opted members cannot exceed the number of elected members as set out in the Constitution.

11. County Representative elected to serve as a **Member of the Council of the Scout Association** (3 year appointment) – **approved unanimously**

Keith Barber

12. County Representative continuing to serve as a **Youth Member of the Council of the Scout Association** (1 year left)

Keri John

13. It was confirmed that Keith Barber, as Suffolk's National Council Representative and Keri John, as National Council Youth Member Representative and the Regional Development Manager (Kathryn Andrews) are 'invited to attend' County Executive meetings.

14. John Emin proposed the appointment of **Ian Brookman as Independent Examiner** – seconded by Rodney Turner and was **approved unanimously**.

15. **The County Commissioner, Mark Pearson** provided the following commentary.

As I am sure many of you regularly hear, it has been an eventful 2020 almost pushing our memories of 2019-20 to one side. My first 16 months as County Commissioner have certainly been eventful. I am going to be looking forward to the coming year and beyond.

But first let me say a big thank you to, the County Executive who have worked tirelessly this year to ensure that we have a viable and robust charity which can continue to deliver excellent programmes for Beavers, Cubs, Scouts, Explorers and Network.

The County has worked on many fronts whether that be creating an entire virtual programme #theadventurecontinues (over 4000 downloads), providing an alternative summer programme East of England Summer Challenge, on the one hand to supporting groups through difficult times, advising on financial grants, keeping you informed of the rapidly changing situations on the other. And less apparent the County has been putting in place the foundations for effectively running the County compliantly through our own Constitution, financial resilience, pandemic communications and up to date training. On that last point before lockdown 250 people completed their first aid and our outstanding safety and safeguarding is one of the best in the UK.

Thank you to Peter, Carl and Jon for your expert running of the executive. We have some changes to the Executive and I would like to pay tribute to the excellent work of those stepping down. First, Andy Tucker who is stepping down from the executive after serving for the last 4 years, most recently developing our Continuity Plan and kicking off funding for Suffolk International Moot. Secondly I would like to thank Ollie Smith for his massive contribution to youth shaped scouting in Suffolk and across the UK, Ollie will continue in his County Programme role. Next I would like to thank Peter Jarvis who is stepping down as an executive member and our representative to the national council. Peter has spent 7 years on the Executive as our representative and has proven a great adviser to many of us. Finally I would like to thank Brian Clampin for his work as a co-opted member of the executive and on it for the past 25 years. He will continue to work in Scouting which now spans six decades of service.

Looking forward – five county teams are now up and running - namely.

- Programme and Youth Shaped – Ollie Smith
- People – Jenny Roe

- *Perception and Community Impact – Colin Winter*
- *Growth and Inclusion – Keith Gleen*
- *Oversight – Rodney Turner*

Our work over the next 18 months to two years will be to support the Districts, Groups and Units as we come out of the pandemic. We are currently using the feedback from a recent survey to leaders on what they need going forwards to survive and thrive. This will focus on leader welfare and recruitment, support for enabling programmes to run across all groups and group sustainability.

And looking further ahead to 2022 we have Suffolk International MOOT to look forward to with a dedicated team in place already. You will be hearing more soon.

Finally, I would like to thank everyone of our volunteers, including those on this video meeting tonight. You have given up your time to be part of an amazing movement helping young people develop their life skills and for many of you this year will have been personally challenging and so I want to thank you for your positivity, resilience, respect, belief, care and cooperation. You should be proud of the Scouting that has been done in 2020 – not the Scouting we’d envisaged at the start of the year, but scouting nonetheless, which has continued to develop young people and contribute in a positive way to their mental health and possibly your own. We have all learnt a lot and embraced change which will make Scouting even stronger. Thank you

16. Awards: The County Commissioner announced the following awards:

Chief Scouts Commendation for Meritorious Conduct

Andrew Waller

Wally Shave

Good Service Awards

Silver Acorn – Ann Robertson

Award for Merit – Diane Hart

Chief Scouts Commendation for Good Service

Graham Bett Hayley Habel David Adams

Mark Green Sarah Adams

Long Service Awards (*distanced live presentations*)

5 Years – Martin Brooks

15 Years – Rodney Turner

20 Years – Leigh Foster-Green

- 17. Graham Woolley, the Regional Commissioner for the East of England,** addressed the meeting and thanked the team for the invitation. He noted the mental health challenges for both young people and their parents and that virtual meetings may have also engaged parents in scouting more. He felt that Suffolk was really going somewhere with all the positive things he has heard about the county and this showed in the mandatory training levels being the best in the region; this underlined the commitment we have for the safety of young people and adults. Mark had been on television promoting what scouting has been doing for young people at this time. Mark has agreed to lead a small regional Perception and Marketing team to look at how well we are perceived. The relationship with the Regional Services Team has greatly improved recently and the focus will now change from growth and development to retention and supporting groups. The COVID tiering was announced and it would continue to affect activities but we will do our utmost to ensure they continue. Whilst being able to do some things virtually, we should look to people we haven’t heard from recently. There’s no financial impact for adult numbers declining, but they may have just stepped back from contacting people in scouting due to other pressures. He encouraged us to contact those people in the near future to check on them and their situation. Picking up on the Census, Graham added that HQ are setting up a hardship fund for those groups who may not have the resources available for subscriptions along with a simple

application process for help. Graham closed by thanking Mark for stepping into the role leading the county for the last 16 months and wishing all well for 2021

18. Peter Jones the County Chair offered warm vote of thanks to Carl Gloess, our extremely efficient County Secretary, for setting up the virtual AGM and for drafting an excellent Annual Report.
THANK YOU TO ALL OF YOU FOR YOUR ATTENDANCE, AND FOR MAKING THIS AGM RUN SMOOTHLY!
He hoped that by next year's AGM, we might hold it in the "real world"!

The meeting closed at 8.45pm