

**MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING  
OF THE SUFFOLK COUNTY SCOUT COUNCIL  
Hallowtree Activity Centre, Alnesbourne Priory, Nacton, Ipswich, IP10 0JP**

**Thursday 19th September 2024 at 7.45pm**

**PRESENT:**

Peter Jones (County Chair), County Commissioner, County Treasurer, County Secretary and Members of the County Scout Council (as per the Suffolk Constitution).

**Introduction by the Chair**

- a. **Welcome:** the meeting opened with Peter Jones, County Chair, welcoming everyone and thanking them for attending especially Mark Brennan (Deputy Lieutenant of Suffolk, Liz Harsant, Chair of Suffolk County Council, Ian Newbery, East of England Regional Commissioner and Katherine West, County Commissioner for Suffolk Girlguiding.

He noted the apologies from Gordon Biden, Vice President and the passing of John Ineson, Vice President in March. The meeting was confirmed as quorate with 30 Council members in attendance and with 6 guests.

- b. **A Thought for the Meeting** was delivered by the Deputy County Commissioner, Keith Barber.
- c. **Apologies** for absence (47) had been received from – Andrew Bailey, Fergus Barber, Alison Barber, Kevin Bean, Sarah Britten, Martin Brooks, Martyn Bryant, Steve Challis, Richard Chaston, Alan Chilestone, Margaret Chilestone, Phil Clark, Celia Comber, Steve Cridland, Barbara Cutting, Leigh Foster-Green, Alfie Foster-Green, Matt Gilbert, Mike Golston, Alan Gosling, Juliet Grimes, Brian Harley, Jo Harley, Debby Hatcher, Paula Hollings, Paul Howard, Angela Humphrey, Anne Humphrys, Janet Jennings, Matthew Jordan, Lucy King, Steve Lovett, Bryan Mayles, Matt Mills, James Nunn, Stuart Parker, Michael Phillips, Alex Price, Vince Quattrucci, Max Raffe, Henry Slim, Ollie Southern, Jayne Vaughan, Emily Waller, Mickey Wardlaw, Stuart Wright
- d. **The Minutes of the previous County Annual General Meeting** held on 21st September 2023 were **APPROVED**.

**Governance**

**a. Suffolk Constitution**

**The Council was asked to APPROVE the recommendations of the Trustee Board as ONE ITEM as set out below in (i) to (iv)**

- i. the Council re-adopts the Suffolk Constitution 22 Sep 2022 Rev 1.0b (Suffolk Constitution) as its governing document until midnight on the thirty-first day of March 2025 (the Appointed Day); and
- ii. with effect from the Appointed Day the Suffolk Constitution shall lapse and fall away as the Council's governing document and shall immediately be replaced by the model County constitution (Model Constitution) set out in Chapter Five (Rule 5.6) of POR to be adopted as the Council's governing document until resolved otherwise by the Council; and
- iii. with effect from the Appointed Day those trustees: (a) elected in accordance with the Suffolk Constitution shall be entitled to serve out their respective term of office as an appointed trustee under the Model Constitution and (b) those nominated trustees approved by the Council in accordance with the Suffolk Constitution shall be permitted to serve out their term of office as an appointed trustee under the Model Constitution until the Council's 2025 Annual General Meeting; and
- iv. with effect from the Appointed Day any co-opted trustee on the Board shall serve out their term of office as a co-opted trustee until the Council's 2025 Annual General Meeting

**This was APPROVED by the members.**

**b. Financial Reporting Year dates**

Members were asked to note that the Council's Financial Year begins on 1st April in each year and ends on 31st March the following year.

Members **ACKNOWLEDGED** the dates.

## **Review of 2023/2024**

### **a. Receive and consider the **Annual Report & Accounts 2023/24:****

**Howard Blackett** presented the Annual Report and highlighted the following points:

- i. *He commended the 40-page document, which makes good reading, to all present*
- ii. *Many thanks to all those who contributed a section of the report. Particular thanks go to Carl Gloess, County Administrator, for ensuring that the report was made ready both electronically and in hard copy for this evening's meeting and to Jonny Emin, Treasurer, for the all-important finance report.*
- iii. *Of note in the report:*
  - a. *The County's finances are in a strong position (Jonny Emin will elaborate).*
  - b. *Our young people have been busy at all levels of scouting.*
  - c. *There has been very encouraging growth in the number of participants, particularly, once again, at Squirrel level and we are on course to meet our 2026 growth target numbers. Details are available in Keith Gleen's excellent report on Growth & Inclusion.*
  - d. *Thanks to all our ACCs in charge of various sections:*
    - i. A.C.C. (Squirrels)            *Brian Harvey*
    - ii. A.C.C. (Cub Scouts)        *Jo Cracknell*
    - iii. A.C.C. (Scouts)            *Angela Humphrey*
    - iv. ACC (International)        *Heather Bridges*
  - e. *There is a very thorough county safety report written by Gary Burden*
  - f. *The DofE Award has run across the county and there have been 28 Bronze, 8 Silver and 2 Gold Awards. There is plenty of scope for further growth in this area. Thanks to Ralph Hansby-Patterson and team.*
  - g. *Training has gone well as ever – thanks to Jenny Roe, our County Training Manager, and her team. We have made significant progress towards the 100% target for mandatory training.*
  - h. *Plenty of CMAT related activities and water-based activities have taken place. Thanks to Andy Black and Leigh Foster-Green for leading the CMAT programme (we'll be hearing more about our CMAT programme later this evening); a special thanks to David Clements who has taken on the role of Interim Water Activities Advisor.*
  - i. *It's been another busy year for Bradfield Park campsite – thanks to Jenny Mullan and her team.*
  - j. *Plenty of awards in recognition of the contribution made by our adult volunteers across the county.*
  - iv. *In summary – the report paints a most encouraging picture. Scouting in Suffolk continues to recover from the ravages of Covid and is thriving.*

No questions were asked about the report.

### **b. Receive and consider the **Annual Statement of Accounts 2023/24:****

**John Emin, County Treasurer** provided the following commentary regarding the accounts:

*The year to 31st March 2024 at a county level was a quieter one than the year before in financial terms due to the much reduced income from events.*

*Income for the year fell to £112,000 down from £343,000 in 2023. The driver for this was the much-reduced income from events such as World Scout jamboree which received the majority of their income in the previous financial year. Remaining residual expenditure for these events carried over into the 2024 numbers. This meant that the county as a whole recorded a deficit or loss for the year of just over £35,000 for the period.*

*This deficit was therefore mainly a reflection of timing differences in income and expenditure over two financial years.*

*County bank balances at 31st March 2024 finished higher than the previous year at £418,000. This is mainly because as at the year-end, date county owed a higher sum to HQ for the annual membership fees than the previous year.*

*Of the £418,000 bank balances shown on the balance sheet, it must be noted that over this is by no means all generally available funds for the county. As at the year-end:*

1. *£216,000 of this sum was owed but not paid to HW for the membership fee. This has now been paid.*
2. *Additionally restricted and designated funds totalling £111,000 we also included.*

*Total county expenditure for the year was just over £28,000, the main items of note being:*

1. *County Secretary payroll and HMRC - £7,200*

2. Loan Repayment re Bradfield debt - £5,000
3. Insurances - £5,500
4. Stores purchases - £5,000

*Our remaining net free cash is comfortably in excess of our minimum reserves policy however we are faced with some potential significant future expenditure, most notably being the relocation the county office, the replacement of more stores equipment and a new storage facility for those stores.*

*A thank you to all who provided their financial information in a timely manner and to Ian Brookman, our examiner, for pulling the consolidated numbers together.*

No questions were asked about the report.

### **Make Appointments**

- a. The County Commissioner's nomination for **County Chair, Rodney Turner**, was **APPROVED**.
- b. The County Commissioner's **Nominated member** of the County Trustee Board was **APPROVED**  
**Selina Noton**
- c. Election of the **County Secretary – Carl Gloess - unanimously elected.**
- d. Election of the **County Treasurer – Jon Emin - unanimously elected.**
- e. The following people were Elected to sit on the County Trustee Board (2 years left).  
**Colin Winter    Keith Barber    Gareth Cox    [Two elected seats remain vacant]**
- f. Jon Emin proposed the appointment of **Ian Brookman as Independent Examiner** – seconded by Peter Jones which was **approved unanimously.**
- g. County Representative nominated to serve as a **Member of the Council of the Scout Association** (2 years left) – **Keith Barber**
- h. County Representative nominated to serve as a **18-24 Member of the Council of the Scout Association** – **currently no nomination.**

It was confirmed that both of Suffolk's National Council Representatives are 'invited to attend' County Trustee Board meetings.

The Chair noted that **Co-opted Members** of the County Trustee Board are selected (if required) at its first meeting after the AGM.

### **Close of Meeting by the Chair of the Trustee Board.**

**The County Commissioner, Howard Blackett** was invited to address the meeting and gave the following commentary.

I would like to raise a few points from my own specific report and add a few comments to the ones I made earlier when presenting the report.

- i. The highlight of the year was Camp Ohana, our County Cub Camp, led by Jo Cracknell and overseen by a team of over 80 adult volunteers. It was a hugely successful event attended by well over 650 cubs, young leaders and adult volunteers
- ii. The death of Graham Parker Acting DC Wolsey was the low point – Graham has given more than 50 years of service to Scouting...truly a lifetime of service/commitment.
- iii. Personnel
  - a. Thanks to the 2,000 adult volunteers who have supported scout groups across the county
  - b. The leadership/management of scouting across the county has been undertaken by the County Trustees, under Peter Jones' Chairmanship; operational matters have been led by the County SLT – thanks to all concerned
  - c. We have for much of the year had a full complement of DCs – they have done an excellent job
  - d. The transformation agenda has been led by Colin Winter supported by a team of District transformation leads
  - e. Gaps – of note we have been lacking a:
    1. DCC (Programme)
    2. ACC (Beavers)

3. CYC
4. There remain gaps in adult volunteers at every level
- iv. Programme
  - a. Plenty of excellent stuff has happened at local level
  - b. The scouts' programme is good but there is scope for greater integration of the DoFE
- v. Strategic plans
  - a. The county and district strategic plans have been updated in liaison with HQ
- vi. Girlguiding Suffolk
  - a. Very warm welcome to Katherine West
  - b. We have been working with Girlguiding Suffolk on a planned county combined county event in summer 2026
- vii. Thanks on a personal level to
  - County SLT
  - Carl Gloess County Administrator
  - County Trustees led by Peter Jones, County Chairman
  - Keith Barber DCC

**The Regional Commissioner, Ian Newbery** was invited to address the meeting and he noted that Suffolk had had a good year with some good growth – a credit to all the leaders and dedication they have. Two Explorer Scouts represented the region at the event announcing the new Chief Scout, Dwayne Fields which had a lot of good publicity. The Transition Programme will be launched by the end of the year and the data on Compass needs to be up-to-date before the three-week long shutdown for data transfer so compliance training should be completed as soon as possible. Transition will introduce new structures and job roles as lead volunteers, district lead volunteers, county lead volunteers, regional lead volunteers, and this gives us a real opportunity to reframe those roles and not to make them quite as frightening as they have broken them down into tasks and not roles, so you can spread what needs to be done over a much broader group of people who only need to pick up one or two or three bits of tasks.

He announced that Howard would be standing down as County Commissioner at the end of the year and he thanked him for his time in post; the task of finding his replacement has started with the formation of a search group. He encouraged people to put names forward if they knew of any candidates.

This year has been particularly busy as there has been a massive amount to do following the Great Orme disaster and the important task of regaining the trust of the public and parents which is now underway to avoid a similar situation happening again and great progress is being made in that regard now.

He concluded by thanking everyone for the work done and the Trustee Board and the new Chair.

**The Chair** thanked the members for attending and noted the close of business.

#### **The formal meeting closed at 8.14 pm**

After the formalities of the meeting had concluded the County Commissioner made number of Award presentations and there followed a presentation by the CMAT team and addresses by Cllr Liz Harsant, the Chair of Suffolk County Council and Mark Brennan, Deputy Lieutenant of Suffolk.

**Awards:** The County Commissioner presented the following awards with citation where available (*presentations in bold*).

- **Suffolk DoE Gold Neckerchief** (a County award for Gold DoE Award achievers)
  - James Gilchrist
  - Alexander Mayles
- **Good Service Awards**

***Commissioners Commendation – Camp Ohana Team***

  - John Brown, **Jo Cracknell**, Chris Frost, **Keith Gleen**, Alan Gosling, Dan Last, Joe Long, **Matt Meyrick**, Stuart Phillips, Max Raffé, **Adam Thorpe**, Amy White.
- **Long Service Awards**
  - **Rodney Turner** (20 years)
- **Wood Badges**
  - **Colin Winter**
  - Heather Bridges

- **Thank You**

- **Peter Jones** was presented with gifts for his service to Suffolk Scouts after 13 years as Chairman by **Jenny Mullan** who also gave some background to his time in the role and especially his support with Bradfield Park campsite and throughout the COVID pandemic. **Howard Blackett** also thanked him on behalf of the Trustees.

**Presentation** then followed from the **CMAT Team with commentary by Andy Black**

**Address by Guests to the Meeting**

**Cllr Liz Harsant**, Chair of Suffolk County Council, addressed the meeting noting how much she thought we should celebrate the achievements over the past year, but also the spirit of adventure that defines Scouting. She recognised the incredible work presented by the Suffolk County Mountain Activities Team which highlighted the dedication to promoting outdoor skills and fostering a love for nature among our Scouts was truly commendable. This ensured that our young members are not just learning important skills, but also developing teamwork, resilience and a deep appreciation for the great outdoors.

On behalf of Suffolk County Council, she thanked us for the hard work, passion and commitment to shaping the leaders of tomorrow. She also thanked Peter Jones and Howard Blackett both standing down and wished them good luck in whatever they were going to do in the coming years and to make the coming year one of great adventure and memorable experiences.

**Mark Brennan**, Deputy Lieutenant of Suffolk was representing Lady Clare, Countess of Euston, Lord Lieutenant of Suffolk and our President as unfortunately, she couldn't attend. She sent her apologies and the best wishes for the night and to thank you for the for the work done day in, day out in the county. Mark noted the incredible work just seen (*from CMAT*) as fantastic examples.

He noted that Lady Clare is a great supporter of all the community groups and organisations, but especially those that are looking after youngsters as that's where it all begins and the development of our younger generation is so, so important, so from Lady Clare, he gave her thanks for everything that's being done.

Mark gave a personal thank you because a lot of what he'd seen today had reminded him he'd not really come across the scouts for a long time. He gave us some personal background about growing up in Bolton, Lancashire and that when he grew up in 60s and 70s in Bolton, it was pretty grim place but he thought he'd had it actually quite good. He decided to leave there in 1993 and joined the army which led to a 29-year career in the armed forces which eventually brought him into Suffolk which is now his home.

He was not planning on writing a book or any memoirs, but if he did, he would start off in the early chapters about childhood and there would be a massive chapter about his time with the 4th Bolton Scouts who for him were probably without doubt, the most influential thing in his life as a young person until the time he left Bolton. He said that school for him did not really exist and a comment made earlier that 'scouts are my people' resonated with him because that's exactly what it was like for him. He had fantastic time. He got to see places that he would not have had the opportunity to go and see otherwise. He spent nights under canvas in Wales and in the Lake District. He used to go on midnight hikes on the local moors and it just inspired in him a spirit of adventure which probably led to decide to want to join the armed forces. During his time in the armed forces, he went on to do some crazy adventures all over the world from the Alps to Norway, in the Arctic Circle, all going back to that early start in life with that small scout group in Bolton.

He gave a heartfelt thank you for everything taking place in Suffolk and asked that we continue the good work as there are a lot of young people out there that that need that similar start in life and that's what Scouting provides.