



Annual Report

4th Sevenoaks (St John's) Scout Group
and The Charles Chapman Trust

Annual Report April 2022-March 2023

6.15 pm Friday 8th September 2023

4th Sevenoaks HQ, Mill Lane, Sevenoaks, TN14 5BU

Charities registered in England and Wales:

4th Sevenoaks Scout Group No. 303438

Charles Chapman Trust No. 303439

www.4thsevenoaks.org.uk

www.facebook.com/4thScouts

Trustee Board

The Scout Group is run and managed on behalf of the Trustees by the Trustee Board. Since April 2023, the Executive Committee was changed to become known as the Trustee Board. This consists of the following people:

2022-2023

Ex Officio Members:-

- Tony Mann (Group Chairman)
- JoAnn Etherington (Group Treasurer)
- Catherine Martin (Group Secretary)
- Jo Brookbank (Group Scout Leader)

The Trustee Board also included all Section Leaders willing to join the Trustee Board as Group Trustee's:

- Shelley Williams (Pinewood Beaver Scout Leader)
- Becky Sandles (Millpond Beaver Scout Leader)
- Steven Kelley (Greatness Cub Scout Leader)
- Matt Podd (Chapman Scout Leader)
- Linsey Fox (Silk Squirrel Leader) from August 2022
- Hollie Silver (Silk Squirrel Leader) April 2022 to July 2022

Elected Members:-

- Michael Dreksler (Swift Assistant Scout Leader)
- Robin Coombs (Wilderness Assistant Cub Scout Leader)
- Martin Maystone (Estates Manager) April 2022 to November 2022

Nominated Members:-

The Group Scout Leader nominated the following members to the Trustee Board as Group Trustee's:

- Tim Gillespie
- Matt Etherington
- Ellen Hayes

Charles Chapman Trust

The headquarters land is held in trust for the 4th Sevenoaks (St John's) Scout Group by the Charles Chapman Trust. The Charles Chapman Trust, and has trustees who are:

- Paul Davis
- Jo Brookbank
- Robin Jones

Structure, Governance and Management

The Group's governing documents are those of The Scout Association. They consist of a Royal Charter, which in turn gives authority to the Bye Laws of the Association and The Policy, Organisation and Rules of The Scout Association.

The Group is a trust established under its rules which are common to all Scouts.

The Trustees are appointed in accordance with the Policy, Organisation and Rules of The Scout Association.

The Group is managed by the Trustee Board, the members of which are the "Charity Trustees" of the Group Council, which is an educational charity. As charity trustees they are responsible for complying with legislation applicable to charities.

The Trustee Board exists to support the Group Scout Leaders in meeting their responsibilities and to provide support for the Scout Group.

Objectives and Activities

The Purpose of Scouting

Scouting exists to actively engage and support young people in their personal development, empowering them to make a positive contribution to society.

The Values of Scouting

As Scouts we are guided by these values:

- Integrity - We act with integrity; we are honest, trustworthy and loyal.
- Respect - We have self-respect and respect for others.
- Care - We support others and take care of the world in which we live.
- Belief - We explore our faiths, beliefs and attitudes.
- Co-operation - We make a positive difference; we cooperate with others and make friends.

The Scout Method

Scouting takes place when young people, in partnership with adults, work together based on the values of Scouting and:- enjoy what they are doing and have fun- take part in activities indoors and outdoors- learn by doing- share in spiritual reflection- take responsibility and make choices- undertake new and challenging activities- make and live by their Promise.

Public Benefit Statement

The Group meets the Charity Commission's public benefit criteria under both the advancement of education and the advancement of citizenship or community development headings.

Group Chair

Tony Mann, Group Chair

2022/2023 has been an incredibly busy year with the team involved across a host of different projects – some quite substantial:

The condemnation of the hall roof required significant time and resources from the team; from the complicated (successful) negotiations with insurers to the specification of the new roof, its construction and resultant refurbishment of a number of areas within the hall. Many of the team were involved with this – in particular Matthew Etherington who devoted much time and expertise to ensure that the project was delivered. More recently the hall has seen an installation of a new “acoustic deadening” ceiling (covered by our insurance claim) and this gave us the ability to add a curtain rail system to allow us to run archery and air rifle shooting with greater ease for volunteers indoors. The investment of time and funds has been significant and critical to allow us to continue to hire the hall to a local pre-school; whose tenancy is also managed by the team and in the coming year refined for mutual benefit. Around the site there has been investment in containers/storage and security – the list is endless as expected for a very busy and heavily used site.

Major events such as the annual fireworks were a great success. MAG 7 involved many of the team – not only the event but organising all the equipment beforehand. During the year we have had many other Scout groups hire our site for camping as well as attendees of the World Scout Jamboree, heading to Korea in the summer of 2023, camping and providing site service.

Day to Day management of the 4th Scouts Group generally falls to those who are also delivering Scouting – daily, weekly, monthly, annually. We have reached a size where we need to spread the load and split the support and delivery functions. The group desperately needs an organised army of volunteers who can free up our leaders to focus on delivering amazing experiences and challenges for our Squirrels, Beavers, Cubs and Scouts. We will be looking for volunteers across:

- Facilities Management
- Quartermaster
- Site Management
- Fundraising

We will be launching a recruitment drive and hope that we get a strong response allowing us to spread the load and benefit from the rich experience and skill pool which our Scout Group's parents and carers present. We owe a huge debt of gratitude to the tireless commitment and contributions of our Scout leaders who do so much behind the scenes.

Group Scout Leader's Report

Jo Brookbank, Group Scout Leader

The 4th Sevenoaks Scout Group is run by volunteers for the benefit of children aged 4 to 14 years and we also have a partnership agreement with an Explorer unit, Puxty. We aim to prepare youth members with skills for life, enjoying activities and adventure.

April 2022 is the first month we are reporting on and we started the year with a great turn out for the District St Georges day parade along Sevenoaks High Street and enjoying a service and activities at Lady Boswell's school. At this service the District awarded jointly to both Beaver Colonies the Sajo Trophy for active participation of an exceptional standard during 2021/22 predominantly for all of the amazing activities we ran during the pandemic, we were also the first colonies to return to face to face Scouting.

Once again this past year the group has continued to grow, with special mention to the Scout troop expansion over the past year accommodating not only those moving up from Cubs but also new members to the group and Scouting.. At the end of the year we also added a 2nd Squirrel drey resulting in the need for names for each drey instead of just Wednesday & Friday! We settled on Silk and Weaver for the connection to the Silk Mill. The 4th is currently the only group with Squirrels in the Sevenoaks District and as such our waiting list has not diminished but grown even more. The 4th is also now the only group in the District with 2 of every section and we are keen to maintain the option to meet on alternative nights as well as enable a greater number of spaces in Scouting, however we have also lost a number of key lead volunteers this past year which has resulted in a greater amount of my time spent in leading sections. Something that needs to change in the coming year.

Being one of the largest Scout sites in Sevenoaks we are often the site of choice for district events and in June we held the very successful District Beaver & Cub activity day, with activities from climbing, crate stacking to soft archery and fencing as well as using the amazing new zorb balls.

We have also hosted training for both archery and fencing this past year with more members of our team and parent supporters gaining activity permits. Having extra volunteers for activities such as these as well as adult trained to deliver stand up paddleboarding, rifle shooting, kayaking and climbing means our young people are able to take part in these activities more frequently.

We also made progress on the larger bouldering wall, which is now fully fixed onto scaffolding and we hope by the end of the summer of 2023 it will be completed and ready for use.

The challenges of our main hut roof replacement that dominated so much of the past year and caused a significant amount of stress until we were able to demonstrate it was covered by insurance. Matt Etherington was of huge support to me throughout this process and we owe him a huge thank you. Our stress and worry has however resulted in some unexpected benefits given

our internal ceiling damage during the repair we have been able to replace this significantly improving the sound in the hall when full of young people as well as replacing our insulation which in turn will hopefully lead to smaller bills with the ever rising costs in fuel being a challenge. Unfortunately our flat roof subsequently sprung a leak so this is next on the big spend list which will be in the order of £15 to £20k using a significant amount of our reserves we built up and demonstrates the need we have for ensuring we are able to deal with repairs such as this.

Over the coming year there will be many changes in Scouting with an update to our online systems and training as well as new names for volunteers. I will become Group Lead Volunteer and this will change for each of the section leaders too.

As always, I shall end by saying we welcome anyone with any skills to support Scouting, please do not ever say "I could not do what you do" because we are all different and any one of you could bring something to the team of volunteers, that enable Scouting for over 300 young people at the 4th. Please just talk to me or anyone of the leadership team and join us in helping deliver fun for all, youth and adult members, as well as ensuring safe Scouting.

Treasurer's Report

JoAnn Etherington, Group Treasurer

Please see the back of this document for details of the group finances.

Our subscription levels were maintained and grew slightly with the addition of the Squirrel Sections for the full year. Despite this as, we did not benefit from a recurrence of the £10,667 grants received in 21_22 due to COVID, our income was £8,402 lower than last year.

Looking at our costs, this was a year of reinvestment for the 4th Sevenoaks Scouts. We had several significant expenses, largely stemming from necessary upgrade works to the scout hut including replacement of the roof and gable ends. Fortunately, the vast majority of the roof work and upgrades were covered by our insurance policy. During the roof works, we purchased a new container unit (£3,500) for use as storage while we did not have access to the hut. We also upgraded the on-site CCTV and lighting (£2,500) following recurring break-ins at the Mill Lane site. This work also involved installing a modern electric board and electrical safety inspections (£1,500).

This year we also needed to service our well-used mini-bus, which cost the group just over (£2,000) in insurance, road tax, and repair.

Finally, in preparation for our many group camp activities, including MAG7, we needed to upgrade ageing equipment at the cost of (£3,700) for new tents, poles, and tarps. These are an investment that will have a long life and benefit the group for many years to come.

This reinvestment meant that we effectively used our group income to fund these improvements and investment in our facilities and equipment, with a net expenditure of (£864) for the year.

Notes to the Accounts

Basis

The Group Accounts have been prepared on a receipts and payments basis.

Reserves Policy

It is the policy of 4th Sevenoaks Scout Group to hold a reasonable level of reserves in order to provide a sound financial basis for the development and running of Scouting within the Group and to vary that level through annual budgeting according to perceived future needs and risks. In particular, the funds are there to provide financial support to the Sections in the establishment and improvement of their facilities, to supplement the cost of training Leaders, to subsidise the annual membership subscriptions, to up-date and purchase activity equipment, to ensure that Leaders who organise and run Section activities have a financial backup when faced with unexpected expenses and to cover possible unforeseen costs and emergencies.

Sectional Reports

Squirrels

Silk Drey and Weaver Drey report

Fiona Williams, Squirrel Drey Leader

Silk Squirrel Drey (Wednesday drey) has gone from strength to strength over the last year. Well established by Hollie Silver, we were sad to see her departure. The Drey has since been led by Linsey Fox and Fiona Williams, assisted by Emily Chertkow. Over the last year there have been a number of Squirrels achieving their Chief Scouts Acorn, and many booked to attend the District camp, MAG7, following a couple of successful trial sleepovers in the last term of this year. The Squirrels have proved they can do anything they set their mind to.

In February 2023 Weaver Squirrel Drey (Friday drey) was started and is slowly growing in numbers as the new team supporting this section of Jen White, Chris Kelly and Nicki gain more experience whilst the drey is being led by Jo Brookbank.

Fun has been had making s'mores at campfires, den building and undertaking a number of joint activities with the Beaver colonies.



Mill Pond and Pinewood Beaver Colonies Report

Shelley Williams, Pinewood Beaver Colony Leader

Pinewood and Millpond Beavers continue to thrive and spaces are in high demand.

Pinewood has a regular number of Beavers attending each week supported by the leaders and a number of parent volunteers. Millpond has a slightly smaller number currently led by Jo Brookbank as at present supported by a smaller team. Both colonies have benefitted by having young leaders volunteer as part of their Duke of Edinburgh volunteering and have taken part in joint activities alongside the 9th Beavers.

The programme has been varied and a substantial amount of badge work has been covered.

We have had a number of practice sleepovers at Mill Lane in preparation for the District MAG7 camp, which many have booked to attend with our group having the largest number of Beavers. This will give our Beavers a chance to experience a large-scale, jamboree style, camp.

Over the year ahead we have a number of events planned for the 4th Beavers (along with the 9th) as well as district events to attend.

Many thanks to everyone for their support over the last year.



Wilderness Pack and Greatness Cub Pack Report

Robin Coombs, Wilderness Assistant Cub Scout Leader and Steve Kelley, Greatness Cub Pack Leader

Both of our Cub packs have had a good year, and have quickly got back to normal after the end of COVID restrictions. Cub numbers have remained healthy with Wilderness having on average 20 Cubs attending every Wednesday, while Greatness, with a larger support team, has a larger group on Fridays, some weeks as high as 30.

We have enjoyed getting back into our regular Cub games, outdoor activities and badge work fully this year. Highlights have been Jubilee activities, our District Beaver and Cub activity day at Mill Lane including climbing,

Zorbs and circus skills and a great days out at Hever Castle and Chatham Historical Dockyard. Post COVID we have been catching up with our camping skills and several cubs have completed their first night away in preparation for the District camp MAG7.

We continue to be grateful for regular support from parents and young leaders who make it possible to do more challenging activities in small groups.

SCOUTS

Chapman Troop and Swift Scout Troop Report

Matt Podd, Chapman Troop Scout Leader, and Michael Dreksler, Swift Scout Troop Assistant Scout Leader

We have happily had a full year of face to face scouting. We have had some great camps and great experiences.

Between our two troops we have 65 scouts.

Highlights of our year included:

- An attempt to fly in a microlight, unfortunately circumstances were unkind to us, we did manage to get some up in the air on a bonus day.
- The Kent International Jamboree happened in the summer of 2022, 35 of us camped out for a week, along with thousands of other scouts, at the County Showground in Detling. The week was jam-packed with activities including climbing, dancing, driving, dodgems, pizzas cooked on site in our army ovens and much, much more.
- A cardboard box sleepout in aid of the homeless charity Porchlight.
- Stand-up Paddleboarding
- Remembrance Day parade in Sevenoaks
- A night navigation hike converging on Sevenoaks Weald followed by a sleepover. We ran this jointly with Sevenoaks Weald Scouts.
- The District Plender hike was back in 2022. The event is a district-wide incident hike that starts in the afternoon and ends well into the evening. We are delighted to say that our scout teams were in first and second places! Unfortunately that means that we have the privilege of helping to organise it in 2024.
- Christmas Camp entirely outdoors, including spit-roast turkey, and silent disco.
- We took our largest ever group to London and competed in the 2023 Monopoly Run. 62 of us pounded the streets of the city looking for clues.
- It seems relatively minor, but we did manage to get some of the more reluctant scouts to camp for their very first time..

During the year we worked closely with Seal Scouts to include them in our camps and events.

Whilst we were sorry to see them go, we are pleased to have sent over ten of our scouts up to join Explorers in the year. It is great to see them continuing their scouting adventure.

The leaders are very thankful for those who have supported the troop over the last year, enabling us to run a full and varied programme, and allowing the Scouts to learn lifelong skills. The young people, parents, leaders and young leaders all make the troop what it is.

EXPLORERS

Puxty Explorer Unit Report

Jo Brookbank, on behalf of Puxty Explorer Unit Leaders

Explorer Scouts is a District section for ages 13.5 to 18 years old, usually run at one or more Group sites with a partnership agreement. Puxty Unit started in February 2018 in Halstead (hence the name used as it has historic importance there) by the end of 2018 the team were unable to continue with running the unit I stepped up to keep the unit running and it moved to Mill lane. The unit has grown from less than 10 to often exceeding 40 on the register and we are delighted that we are retaining so many teenagers.

The unit continues to be led by me, but ably supported by Andy Mucklow (who has also led on the restart of Duke of Edinburgh award participation in the district this past year), Steve Davies and when home from University Felix Baker and Millie Strickland. This past year we also have a number of Network Members (18-25yo) meeting at the same time, in practice this is mostly those 18yo who are still in school before leaving for university.

In 2022 the Explorers have taken part in a huge variety of activities from climbing, stand up paddleboarding, hikes, cooking, burning things, making braid and woggles. In the summer of 2022 over 50 from all over the district were camping at Kent International Jamboree next to the 4th Scouts, although we were so busy we barely spoke to each other all week!

Currently we cannot consider anyone from outside of Scouting joining Explorers so can only accommodate anyone moving up from a Scout group. If you are reading this and think a meeting later in the evening, we meet from 7:45pm, could be something you could support, and maybe you would like to get involved in Scouting (whether you have had experience in Scouting yourself or not), send me an email or speak to any of the leaders. These later meetings can work well for people with jobs that make getting back early more difficult and I can promise you lots of Scouting fun.

Appendices

- Finance report for 2022-2023 (2 pages)
- Minutes of previous year's AGM