

Minutes of a meeting – Chester & District Scout Council
Annual General Meeting – 16th September 2021
On-Line Zoom Meeting

20.00 Meeting opened

Present:

David Bull
Keith Harding
Mike Hillier
Brandon Hone
Dave Hopley CC
June Hughes
Chris Huxley-Clowes
Ashley Hynds
Gill Owen
Grahame Polley
Hilary Roberts
Jane Shortall
Daniel Skinner
Michael Stout
Neil Thornton
Robin Turney
Alan Wilding

Apologies:

Rachel Chadburn
Kristy Collins
Tim McLachlan
Megan Porter
Liz Roberts
Helen Shone

1. Opening

The AGM was opened with a reflection from Dan Skinner who spoke as follows:

Before I decided what to say for these opening remarks, I had a quick listen to what I read last year. Turns out it was all in rhyme, I'm sorry to disappoint but that's not the case this time. I will however stick with the reflective theme.

It's been over a year since our last AGM, and much has changed. We have a vaccine, and the scouting readiness level has gone green. Beavers, Cubs, Scouts, Explorers, Network, leaders and even squirrels too can now meet face to face. We have had some challenges and things have changed.

Together as a scouting community we can and have had a real positive impact on many people and the world around us. The future is bright again with gathering returning, Damboree next month, Chamboree next year where thousands of scouts will meet again. Let's make the most of the opportunities ahead, while as always remaining respectful to those around us.

Every meeting, activity and even by being here you make a choice that choice is to be a be a volunteer. For that like many others all I can say is thank you.

2. Adjustments to the Constitution

Alan explained how there would now be two votes, the first about agreeing for the meeting to take place on zoom and the other regards changes to the constitution.

Ashley Hynds explained the changes to the constitution. Ashley spoke about how when he joined the Executive Committee, he wanted to understand more about what his role should be and what the Constitution of the Chester & District Scout Council says in comparison to the Scouts Policy, Organisation and Rules are Ashley found a few discrepancies. Between himself, Neil, David Bull and Callum they have created a new Constitution for Chester & District Scout Council. It states that we will adopt the Scout Association POR Rule 4.25.

The existing constitution did not say what we should be doing as a District Executive, few extra bits have been added on about sub committees, membership committee, how we arrange meetings etc. Wrote it up and made some changes, put it to the Executive Committee and agreed it needed to be put to the wider Scout council.

Alan has put it out prior to this meeting and now If anyone has any objections if they can log them before the next Executive Committee Meeting on the 21st October 2021. Anyone not attending the meeting tonight can have a say. No questions were raised.

Alan launched the poll with two questions.

1. Is to allow the meeting to be held by zoom and we are recording the meeting.
2. Constitution changes to bring in line with the POR as outlined by Ashley.

Brandon was unable to vote on-line but it was noted he voted yes to both.

Both questions, unanimously passed with 100% in favour.

3. Welcome & Apologies

Unfortunately, the sad news is that Neil is stepping down as Chair as of tonight. Also, Alan has been unable to find someone as wonderful as Neil to replace him. Under Rule 4.26d of POR Alan can do it for a short time. Alan hopes to have someone in place for the next Executive Meeting on 21st October 2021. Neil is staying on the Executive Committee.

Apologies received from:

Rachel Chadburn
Kristy Collins
Helen Shone
Tim McLachlan
Megan Porter
Liz Roberts

4. Confirmation of Agenda

There were no additional items to be added to the agenda.

5. Minutes of the AGM 2020 and matters arising (online vote)

Alan had explained how to vote online. The minutes of the 2020 AGM were distributed through the e-update and a vote was held on acceptance on-line meeting was accepted. A vote was taken during the meeting on acceptance. Passed unanimously, 100% in favour.

6. Procedural issues (if any)

7. Election of officers

District Secretary, we had one nomination for the post. No other nominations, we don't need an election, Liz continues to be District secretary.

District Treasurer, to our knowledge Arijit Dey is still stuck in India due to covid restrictions. However, he has expressed due to his wife's ill health and other issues he was not willing to re-stand. Alan wanted to thank Arijit for the time he did do as Treasurer, in just a short time he did introduce some valuable new procedures. Want to thank him for his time and expertise.

If anyone knows a Treasurer, can you let one of the District Team know.

8. Presentation of Annual Review

Alan, District Commissioner presented to the meeting the Annual Review of what Chester Scouts did and achieved during 2020.

A copy of the slide show is available on-line.

Annual Review put to vote. Passed unanimously, 100% in favour.

9. Presentation of the Annual Accounts

Arijit was unable to joint the meeting. Alan called upon Neil to present the Accounts. Neil wanted to put on record his thanks to Arijit who whilst only being in the post for a couple of years was a great asset for us and did some very good things. Notably introducing automation to our finances, access to online banking, payments which was invaluable during COVID. He also brought a brilliant attitude asking questions of processes but not only that he also brought solutions to the questions. A big thank you to Arijit. Arijit prepared a statement which Neil read to the group.

I start by saying that 2020 had been a strange and difficult year for all of us due to the pandemic, however it has also forced us to think differently and probably has caused a permanent shift in the ways of working. Most of the organisations worldwide have been forced to adopt digital means of working and the Scouts have not been an exception.

The accounts are a final draft version with some assumptions around asset valuations as actual figures are yet to be received. It has been submitted for independent examination as we still await some actual figures.

The pandemic of Covid-19 had meant that most of the Scouting activity had to be suspended as a result the overall cash receipts for 2020 was less than half of what it was in 2019. The biggest drop, as expected, was in the receipts from youth programme and activities.

Without a government grant of £10k received during the year, the receipts figure would have been even worse.

However, on a positive note, despite the pandemic, the net membership subscriptions received in 2020 were 6% higher compared to 2019 mainly due to some previous year dues cleared by some of the groups in 2020.

The district shop was in surplus in 2020 for the first time after 2 consecutive years being in deficit. This was mainly due to the recovery of some of the payments from previous year's debtors. However, there was still £3.5k of invoices outstanding at the end of 2020.

Similar to the trend in receipts, the payments were also much less than last year. Out of the total payments made in 2020, a bulk was towards Eurojam refunds made due to cancellation of planned activities. Other major payments made were for utilities, insurance, and other regular district expenses.

Overall due to the lack of receipts from youth activities and due to large amount of refunds made, 2020 ended up in a deficit of £5.5k. Hopefully, with the gradual easing of pandemic related restrictions this year, we will have better results in 2021.

Copy of accounts attached with these minutes.

Alan launched the poll for the approval of accounts. 100% in favour.

10. Elections for the District Executive Committee

The nominations were opened approx. six weeks ago and given a month to run for nominations. Minimum of four, maximum of six member nominated positions on the Exec Committee. We had six nominations, so no election is now necessary. Congratulations and welcome to the following who have been elected:

Chris Huxley-Clowes
Ashley Hynds
Michael Stout
Neil Thornton
Craig Turnbull
Calum Webster

11. Notification of District Commissioner nominated members of District Executive Committee

The District Commissioner is allowed to elect the same number of people as have been elected by the membership. So, in this case Alan has up to six persons who he can nominate should he wish.

Alan had five nominations which are:

David Bull
Dave Evans (QM)
Steve Shone
Kristy Collins
Michael Hillier

Alan has one more nomination which he is saving for when we find someone To carry out the building's projects, the move from Trafford Street to Weston Grove and getting Weston Grove up to standard.

As Brandon has previously mentioned we have the Youth Reps who are

Under 18's
Tomos Smalldon
Emma Shortall
Dean Ferguson

Network
Alec Stokes
Chloe Shone

12. Election of member to serve on the County Scout Council

We have one nomination which is Graham Polley. Graham Polley has served in this role for a number of years and has agreed to continue as our member on the County Scout Council. Congratulations to Graham.

13. Appointment of independent examiner

Neil advised that we would like to re-select McLintocks Practice on the Chester business park. Someone from the Caroline Blake Partnership. Recommend that we re-select them.

14. County Commissioners Address

Dave Hopley the County Commissioner addressed the group. Dave talked through his presentation.

Dave particularly talked about priorities, funding and kindness. Dave talked about the effect of COVID on young people. He has been humbled by the dedication everyone. Chester has been busy organizing various activities on line which is fantastic. Lots of initiatives have been going on. Fantastic work with home scouting. Pandemic has tested our resilience and kindness has immersed as one of the most important qualities in society and everyone has proven they have it in bucket loads. Despite having busy lives still finding the time to help volunteer with Scouts.

Lots of challenging issues regarding finances and drop in memberships. However, we have received various grants and funding which has helped support us.

Lots of things going on in the Chester District but a few examples that Dave gave shout outs to are

Calum Webster from 42nd who has been making face shields for NHS Staff
Vicky Taker from 8th Chester who has made sure people have supplies they needed during the lockdown.

Denise from Chester Scout Active Support Unit who had her head shaved for the Hospice of the Good Shepherd.

Rikki from Tarporley for his on-line knotting sessions.

Chester held two virtual camps, one involving Gang Show Members, thank you to Chester for their support for the Virtual CuBe event also

Chester District contributed to Cheshire Scouts Youth Forum during covid. Which helped with the National Programme Design. County Training Team have been Very active during COVID, switching to on-line training. Huge thank you for support in prioritising that.

Retained 80% of members during the last year at last census. Incredible. Fantastic that we managed to retain that many members. Also, we are seeing many people coming back and will be interesting to see how well Scouts are bouncing back. We are getting a lot of interest in all areas.

78% across the county managed to grow their numbers. In Chester a big shout out to 1st Farndon, 1st Saltney, 1st Sandstone, Garrison Explorers, Maverick Explorers Renegades Explorers and Wildflower Explorers massive congratulations on growing in a pandemic. All credit to everyone in growth and retention.

We are remaining focused on recruiting and retaining adults. National campaign running.

Year ahead very exciting, lots to look forward to 2021/2022. Reopened Forrest Camp in May. Bookings are opening for Space Themed Jamboree 2022. Make sure your group is booked on. If you are IST also get booked on.

Launched a BTEC Level 2 award in Team Work and Personal Development. Had a successful pilot with it this last year. Good for Explorer Scouts who are doing DofE. Held Celebrate and Success recently giving out various awards.

Cheshire Hike returns next year 2-3rd April 2022. Information on 25th World Scout Jamboree in South Korea available soon.

Exciting year ahead lots to look forward to. Lots of exciting activities planned in the district.

Genuine thank you to every single one of you on the call tonight. Pay a massive tribute to Alan and the District Team, to Neil and the District Executive. Chester and District has amazing volunteers. Thank you so much.

Alan thanked Dave.

15 Presentation of Awards

Alan has a large number of awards to give out, some have already been done virtually. Some will be done face to face and not planning to go through them tonight.

Alan did deliver a box to Neil earlier in the evening for his almost 10 years of service as Chair.

Neil wanted to thank Dave Hopley for his words. He also wanted to thank all the uniformed Scouts people he has worked alongside over the nine years. Neil said Scouting should be proud of themselves for the work they have continued to put in throughout COVID.

Neil opened his present and card and said thank you, he had enjoyed his years as Chair. And is not going away but will be working with the group ongoing. Thank you for your fellowship and support over the last nine years.

16. Vote of Thanks

Brandon closed the meeting by thanking Daniel for the reflecting piece about the world we live in and for the future of Scouting. Also like to thank Neil for his guidance and support he has given everyone over the last nine going on ten years. It's a shame Neil has stepped down as District Chair but for all your hard work and commitment for the District we thank you.

Alan's first two years as District Commissioner have been a challenge to say the least but thank you for all your time, dedication and support you have given to help Scouting pull through and move into the future. Thank you.

To our guest Dave Hopley, thank you for thoughts and thanks to our leaders that you have given.

To Arijit thank you for all your hard work and expertise you have put in to being our Treasurer even when you are miles away.

Thank you to Liz for being the District Secretary.

To our District Team and District Executive for all your time dedication and hard work in keeping the district running. Thank you for helping to provide a vision and support moving Scouting forward and into the future.

Finally, and most important thank you of all to all our volunteers in the district for going above and beyond to making sure all our youth members are given the skills for life and always putting them at the forefront of all we do.

A huge thank you from myself, Alan, Kristy, Megan and Neil.

Alan thanked Brandon and brought the meeting to a close.

Meeting closed at 21.09.