

1st Potton Scout Group

AGM 2023 Reports



Group Scout Leader's Report

After 18 or so months in the role of Group Scout Leader, it finally feels as though I have found my feet; the kind words of support from other volunteers have been gratefully received. Group Scout Leader is a busy job, and 1st Potton is a very active Group. However, it is a pleasure to be able to serve in this role.

Here are some of the highlights from the last 12 months.

Leader Team

Something I wanted to work on is how our fantastic volunteers collaborate and work across the sections, and we have made lots of progress. The introduction of the leaders' WhatsApp groups, which are sometimes a bit too noisy, the volunteers' BBQ, and recently an ambitious and successful Group camp, aka Coronation Camp, are all examples of how we work better together. The regularity in which our leaders are helping at meetings outside their regular sections is hugely positive.

Thirteen of our leaders attended the Bushscout Scouting Skills course together, where they learned or updated their knowledge of knife and axe work, fire lighting, campfire cooking and tarpology. It has been fantastic to see these skills already being passed on to our young people. I believe investing in our leaders' skills will enable us to continue providing great scouting experiences.

Most of our leaders have been good at completing their required training. Still, others have gone above and beyond to gain new specialist activity permits, including Louise and Roy (shooting permits), Alasdair and Roy (archery permit), Neil, Roy and Myself (tomahawks), Louise (nights away) permit) and Peter and Andy G (enhanced first aid). I hope we can keep this level of training up.

New Leaders

A constant challenge is the need to recruit adult volunteers. At last year's AGM, I reported on the possibility we would no longer be able to offer Beaver Scouting in Potton. That's all changed, and we now have enough leaders to support two Beaver Colonies. All in all, we have recruited a further 21 adult volunteers into the Group this year. That's a lot of DBS checks!

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Awards

We have seen a good number of our leaders' gaining awards in the past 12 months, and I would like to congratulate them for their achievements further:

- Maggie Harris - Silver Acorn
- Phil Ball – 5 years service
- Debbie Hare – 5 years service
- Peter White – Wood badge
- Alasdair Perrin – Wood badge
- Thomas Hammond – Wood badge
- Carl Sturges – 10 years service
- Yvonne Humberstone – wood badge and 30 years service
- Roy Snell - Wood Badge

I have introduced a Group Scout Leader commendation, affectionately known as the Badger Award, to be given to young people who contribute to the success of the Group beyond what we would ordinarily expect. Three young people have received a Badger Award this year, including Lewis Glennister, Lily Perrin and Daniel Cobb. Each is well deserved.

One final award traditionally presented at the AGM is for 'Services to the Hut.' There have been three worthy contenders this year, but I would like to give this award to Alasdair Perrin, who has worked his socks off to create the new archery activity station and the wood store in the field. Hat tip also to Neil Cobb for assisting in these endeavours and Carl Sturges for all manner of maintenance work around the HQ.

Sections

Once again, all the sections have been busy this year, running a full and varied programme for our young people. There are reports from the Section Leaders to follow, but I want to offer my sincere thanks to our volunteer leaders for their selfless dedication to providing an excellent Scouting experience for our young people. It's very impressive.

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Trustee Board

We must remember the vital work done by the Executive Committee, now known as the Trustee Board. While they may be less visible, their work is important to the success of the Group.

Thank you to Sam, Debbie, Julia, Paula, Carl, Peter, Jan and Jess.

Sadly, this year we are saying goodbye to some of our Trustees, and I wish to thank them for their service to 1st Potton Scout Group.

Debbie Hare, who is standing down as Group Secretary after six years; Paula Worswick, who has sat on the committee as Secretary, then managed the hut hires and more recently as the parent's representative, in total volunteering for around 16 years; Kate Bywater, who stepped down in January as the Group's treasurer following 12 years of service to the Group.

Please join me in wishing them hearty thanks for their dedication.

Waiting List

Our waiting list keeps growing. We have more than 80 young people waiting to join the Group, primarily of Squirrels and Beavers age. This demand bodes well for the future.

And finally

I am looking forward to the next twelve months as Group Scout Leader. There is already a lot going on, with Cubs and Scout camps planned in the summer and another leaders' BBQ and activity session. We have set up a website for the Group over the last 12 months, which I hope we can start to populate with stories of Scouting achievements from across the Group.

Last but not least, we have enough demand for another Squirrels Drey and possibly even reopening Drake Troop. Watch this space over the next 12 months.

Andy Bargery
Group Scout Leader

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Hazelnut Squirrels Drey – Section Update

Squirrels is a year old, and what a year it's been, from exciting science experiments to hikes in the pouring rain we have done it all. We started small with only twelve squirrels and now we have nearly 20, with some already having moved up to beavers. We've been on three camp days, which have included activities such as archery, pioneering, go karting and a firm fave with my brave squirrels, the cave bus!!!

I have had seven squirrels get their acorn award. What an achievement to have done in less than a year. They were awarded this around the campfire in front of everyone and it was just lovely. This means that they have had to achieve four challenge badges and at least two activity badges.

Each session comes with a highlight and who knows what it is going to be with four- and five-year-olds. Each and every one of our Squirrels start the session with their scout promise and let me tell you they know it off by heart! Not forgetting we have every single squirrel knowing how to put someone in the recovery position, call 999 and bandage you up as we did our first aid badge recently, which they loved.

Having asked the children what their best things we've done, we had these answers: baby bunnies, yoga, den building, kite making, water fights, fire engines, policemen, backwards day and popping popcorn. The list could go on!

We have a lot of our original squirrels moving up to beavers this September which means we can take some more children from our ever-growing waiting list.

I am incredibly proud of this little group and in the words of Mouse, a squirrel can do anything a beaver, cub or scout can do!

Charlotte Chalkley aka Mouse
Section Leader

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Woodland Beaver Colony – Section Update

- Woodland colony re-opened at the end of Spring term 2023, and welcomed 13 young people as new Beavers
- Woodland is led by me (Otter), and I am supported by Jess (Ratty) formally from Riverbank colony. Leigh (Buck), Natasha (Foxy) and Mark (Bear), who are Assistant Scout Leaders (ASL).
- Leigh and Mark have completed their initial ASL training, and together with me, they are working towards the Wood Badge Award

1st Term

- For our first term, we concentrated on getting to know each other; taking part in lots of games to encourage team building, completing crafting activities, and generally settling the young people (YP) into their new experience at Woodland colony
- During the colder/wetter weather, most of our meetings were spent in the Scout Hut. However, we still managed to spend some time outside, and the Beavers achieved their first activity badge: *Health and fitness*
- To encourage their creativity and sense of inclusion, we asked all YP to suggest activities for next term, and incorporated everyone's ideas into the planning. Suggestions included: Hiking, scavenger hunts, rock climbing and even a trip to Italy!
- We were also able to end the term with a fantastic Easter surprise - one of our YP's parents kindly brought in a number of rabbits, which the Beavers all thoroughly enjoyed engaging with, and learning about! This kind gesture highlighted how invaluable it is to have support from our parents and carers.

2nd Term

- Our first meeting ended with 12 of our colony being invested!
- The Beavers used household recycling to make wacky robots, and achieve their *Builder* activity badge
- To celebrate the arrival of British Summer Time, and to tie-in with our first half of terms theme of '*The Great outdoors*', we utilised the green spaces surrounding the hut, to play games and continue promoting team-building
- The beavers had their first camp! This was particularly notable, as a lot of the YP were only aged 3 and 4 during the COVID pandemic, meaning a lot of

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them had never stayed away from home - a big weekend for all of us, and great fun!!!

- All 9 Beavers that stayed overnight were awarded their first *night away staged badge*
- To mark the end of half term break, we took the Beavers on a very successful and sunny hike up Deepdale, to explore the forest and wildlife, practice mindfulness, and build dens.
- The theme for this half of the term, is 'Community'. For our first meeting back, we celebrated Pride month with a number of activities, including a visit from a rainbow guide leader, who kindly volunteered to paint the YP faces!!
- To acknowledge the Beaver who suggested we visit Italy, we held our very own Italian night! Sadly, the budget couldn't stretch to a few nights in Tuscany, so we learnt some fun facts about the geography, history and culture of Italy, and made home-made Pizzas!
- For the remainder of the term, we have a trip to the fire station planned, a litter-pick, and a policeman named Bear coming to talk to the Beavers about stranger danger and road safety

Looking to the future

- All leaders will continue to complete their training towards the wood badge, and already have a number of courses booked throughout the year
- Further steps are being taken to include the YP's parents and carers more, such as the recent creation of a whataspp group to share photos of activity participation
- A 'Parenting Rota' is also being considered, to offer opportunities for parents to showcase any interesting hobbies they feel the Beavers will be interested in, or simply just want to see what their young person gets up to at Woodland Colony! As previously referred to, support and engagement from our YP's parents is invaluable, so we're keen to encourage their involvement in whatever way we can
- Now our colony is finding its legs, we are going to discuss how to best share the planning between the leaders, incorporate more opportunities to earn badges, and gradually introduce more traditional aspects of scouting; fire lighting, knife/axe work, hiking, and generally spending more time in nature whilst we have the day light
- We also want to continue consulting our YP for their ideas on future meetings / terms - this is a guaranteed way of ensuring they continue to have

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fun whilst learning, and also alleviates some planning pressures from the leaders

Aimee Chapman aka Otter
Section Leader

Riverbank Beaver Colony – Section Update

Last summer Riverbank Colony was at risk of closing having lost their Section Leader to work commitments. I'm therefore thrilled to be able to report back that Riverbank remains a thriving and active Colony.

Jess Cobb and I took over as joint Section Leaders in September 2022. I was new to Scouting, although my children have been or are currently members of the Group; Jess on the other hand has lots of previous experience, both in Scouting and working with young people.

What an action packed and loud nine months it's been! As member numbers had been 'run down' in the absence of having a new Leader lined up, our first task was to introduce 8 young people from the wait list to Riverbank. We haven't looked back since and typically have 18 active Beavers at any one time, more recently having been joined by some of our first intake of Squirrels as they have turned 6. We have invested 16 Beavers since September and had 6 young people swim up the river to Cubs.

We have focused our efforts on providing the Beavers with a variety of opportunities and learning experiences which they wouldn't ordinarily have access to at school. We have covered 7 activity badges, 4 staged badges and most of the Beavers have achieved 2 or 3 challenge badges as well. The Colony is relatively young age-wise so we are hopeful we can squeeze in enough to have some of those we took in last Autumn gain their Bronze Chief Scout Award.

Some of our favourite meetings have included:

- A trip to Potton Fire Station where we learnt about the training our retained firefighters undergo, the equipment they use and had a look around and in the main engine.

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- Celebrating Chinese New Year where we learnt about the celebration, but the highlight was introducing the children to the game 'chinese whispers', one that remains popular and always ends in laughter
- We made pizza and sausage rolls as part of our Cooking badge, both of which looked and smelt absolutely delicious

I also shouldn't forget the most memorable meeting which has to be a hike around Deepdale. The heavens literally opened as we started and we walked in the rain for the first 20-25 minutes, not that it put the Beavers off. When it stopped, the sun came back out, providing us with a beautiful evening sky under which we enjoyed the obligatory chocolate biscuit bar.

And then of course there are the extra events we have attended. I was so proud of the Beavers at Group Camp. For most this would have been their first night away from home, not staying with family. They did their parents and me proud, showing courage and willingness to try new things.

Just last weekend we joined the Bigg Weekender, a Biggleswade district event attended by multiple Groups and Sections. Whilst we didn't stay over, we attended for the day and the Beavers got to experience the atmosphere of a big camp along with trying out a number of new and adventurous activities. They were polite and good spirited, despite the heat, but more importantly totally up for trying out new things.

Behind the scenes, I have been busy attending as many relevant Scout Association training courses as I can. This is not only to build my experience but also provides programme ideas, access to a network of experienced local leaders and I'm working towards gaining my nights away permit, which would allow me to organise and run overnight experiences for the Colony. [For the avoidance of doubt, there were a number of permit holders on site and in charge at the Group Camp].

Having shown me the ropes and shared much knowledge and experience, Jess has stepped away from Riverbank to support our more recently opened Woodland Colony. I personally thank Jess for her help, encouragement and mentoring; and the Colony thanks her for her commitment and contribution.

Jess however is not the only person we need to thank. Charlotte, Section Leader for Hazelnut Squirrels, has supported Riverbank at pretty much every meeting. She is adored by the Beavers and provides continuity for those younger ones moving up

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from Squirrels. We also have several parents who regularly step in to help us when we are offsite and need more pairs of hands and eyes – they know who they are and my thanks go out to them.

All that said, we do need to recruit an additional uniformed member for Riverbank, ideally two. Doing so would enable us to do a greater number of activities requiring closer supervision and guidance.

So to summarise, after an uncertain future, Riverbank has gone on to have a great year. We've done many different activities, importantly had fun doing these, and from my perspective I have watched the young people positivity grow their personalities, friendships and skills.

Becky Perry
Section Leader

Leopards Cub Pack – Section Update

So Leopard Cubs have had a fantastic year now that we can finally get back to face to face meetings after such a long period of restrictions.

During the past year we have camped, cooked, baked, hiked, swum, set fires, attended the November Remembrance Day parade and St Georges day parade and church service, took part in the District Bowling event which also involved travelling on the Ivel Sprinter, most attended the Group coronation camp, did a litter pick, had an evening where the Cubs cleaned windows here at the HQ, planted some flowers, ironed neckers and practised tying shoe laces we spent an evening with Arlesey Cheyenne Cubs and we recently had an archery evening (thanks to Alastair and also to Emma for running that) and while some were shooting arrows the others were planting tomato plants and making cards for fathers day.

Last weekend 15 Cubs attended Bigg Weekender, where they did rifle shooting, archery, climbing, tomahawks, scouting skills, african drumming, go karting, badge swapping and many other scouting activities, followed by a visit to the chip shop and a camp fire.

Unfortunately we weren't able to camp this time owing to Leader and transport availability, but it was a great opportunity for Potton Cubs to meet other groups.

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Plans for the remainder of this term are to do a Muddy Obstacle Run at Fit4OCR in Baldock, and have invited Panther Cubs to join us, we are going to do rafting at Shuttleworth and are doing a Water Activity day at Grafham. We have invited Arlesey Cheyenne cubs to visit us on 4th July for an American-themed evening, and hope to have a knife-safety evening shortly.

We haven't yet used our annual funding for an event but I plan to take the Cubs on an outing in the Autumn ...

We currently have 22 Cubs - although we are about lose 4 if Peter is able to take them into Scouts, we have 2 ACSL's Tom and Emma, as well as Toni Meyer who is about to undertake more training to become an ACSL.

I am grateful for the occasional help of Stephen Molloy and also Jane Leonard and I have 3 DBS checked parents that I can call on for back up. It is very difficult to plan and run an exciting programme and maintain the correct ratios without the commitment of my Leaders who from time to time do need time away from section meetings and weekend events so I would love to have more help so that the children can learn more and develop their skills. I know that Andy is doing his best to recruit for Leopards as well as other sections for which I am grateful.

We are fully on board with OSM now which does make it easier to keep track of badge records, etc to lighten the load. The greatest issue that I now have is keeping track of payments; when I first took over as Akela everything was paid by cash or cheque which we banked, so was easy to record payments. Now that the majority of payments are made online it has become the burden of the Treasurer to forward the information to us, and hope that the payment is easy to identify.

I would very much support upgrading OSM in whatever way helps all section leaders with tracking monies received.

I do also think that the cost of OSM ought to be covered by the Group rather than from section "running money" as this hasn't increased for many years, but everything we need to purchase - i.e. badges and equipment has.

Jan May
Section Leader

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Panthers Cub Pack – Section Update

- May last year saw Maggie (Akela) hand over the reins of Akela to Louise (Newkela). Since then the packs leadership has retained the existing section assistants Alasdair (Baloo), Yvonne (Kaa), Phil (Rocky) and Keith (Shere Khan) and gained 3 new ones. We welcomed Lauren (Raksha), Chris (Rama) and Jamie (Hathi). We have also gained Neil (King Louie) who also is AGSL. This means that Panthers has a strong and diverse leadership team with leaders to deal with all the personalities of the YP and provide a fun programme.
- Panthers leaders have also developed in the last year with Newkela completing all basic training and becoming a rifles, cave bus, climbing wall and nights away permit holder. Baloo achieved his wood beads and also became an archery, climbing wall and nights away permit holder.
- Yvonne was awarded her 30 years of scouting service award.
- The panther pack has grown in number and is currently full with 30 children registered. Attendance is very good from the YP.
- The YP have been given the opportunity to complete 15 badges, including paddleboards stages 1&2, Emergency Aid stages 1,2 &3, cycling, money skills, home help, artist this last year and before September the 6 cubs that are ready/ nearly ready to move up should have achieved their silver award
- Panthers have attended numerous camps. There was Paccar in May 2022, District Cub Camp Sept 2022, and the coronation camp May 2023. There is also a three night camp at Tolmers taking place July 2023, District cub Camp Sept 2023.
- We are very excited to have booked the Lord Amoy Boat that is docked in the docklands for a water activity camp. We are taking the country kids to camp in the heart of London and do a wide range of activities whilst there. We are sharing this adventure with Langford Cubs and hope to make some new friends.
- Panthers have enjoyed a range of fun days out as well. We attended Clip n Climb in Cambridge for our Christmas treat, the water activity day at Grafham Water, the RAF museum in Hendon, district bowling competition to name a few. This upcoming year we are to attend some more great days out (but they are Newkela's secret just now unless you promise not to tell the kids). Ohhhh ok Panthers are potentially going to attend the natural history museum and sleep over (Dinosnore), go karting and a trip to Legoland. (please don't tell the kids)

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- Panthers is growing and evolving as a pack. The YP are our focus. Our programmes are badge and event based with all major holidays and celebrations covered with our programme. This next year with the covid pandemic fully behind us we hope to get the YP back into the community. We enjoyed an evening at the local fire station this term and hope that we can have more evenings with different groups amongst the local community. We asked the cubs what they wanted to see in their events and programmes. Their ideas form a huge part of the base of our programme. If they don't want to do it, they won't want to come.
- Panthers is fun and educational, we are fully inclusive and have several children with extra needs that attend. We manage all the needs and make sure no one is left out. The YP are challenged but feel safe. We have a happy bullying free environment where everyone is given equal opportunity. Our regular attendance of YP and high numbers of YP hopefully mean we are doing a good job. Each and every adult involved in panthers gives it 100% and as a section lead I couldn't ask for more. I want to thank the team for all their hard work and dedication to our young people.

Louise Esposito
Section Leader

Raleigh Scout Troop - Section Update

Last year we were focussing on getting things back to normal post-COVID, building a solid team of leaders, and renewing training and permits. Most of that is now in place.

There are still few district events taking place, and at the Scout age group we are still working locally to organise what would previously have been District-level events (e.g. survival camp & expedition hike). We have also continued to take an active roll in supporting the County-level Water Activity Days run by Luton Sea Scouts, both as Scouts and leaders.

All in all, that means we have covered everything needed to give our oldest Scouts the chance to gain their Gold Chief Scouts award before they leave at the end of the school year. And offer a wide range of experiences for scouts of all ages.

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We have continued to take in more Cubs, and have now accommodated all who are due to move up from cubs at the present time. We have also been able to take a small number from the waiting list. That means we have a young troop. The troop is also almost at capacity, and few are due to leave in the next school year. Consideration may therefore need to be given again to recruiting further leaders and opening a second troop, as we are not able to run a troop with over 30 scouts.

For summer camp this year we will take 16 scouts and 5-6 leaders to Hesley Wood, north of Sheffield and near the Peak District. We try to provide a range of different camp experiences over the years, and this year a wooded site gives them the chance to try hammocks and other woodland activities. The school we have used for minibus hire no longer does so, but we have managed to secure one from another scout group for this camp. And we value the support of the Reeds in getting the equipment there and providing us with an experienced camp mother (needed more than ever as the troop is now 50-50 boys and girls for the first time!).

We have been pleasantly surprised this year at how well so many of our scouts have done in terms of pioneering, and have more pioneering experience in our leadership team. As a result, we have been able to build some quite impressive structures and objects, including a tower with the help of cubs at the Group Coronation Camp, and a functioning crane. Along with fire lighting, saw, knife and axe work, navigation and map reading, day and night hikes, cooking, wide games, and much more.

Peter White
Section Leader

Forresters Explorers – Section Update

Explorers is the section of scouting that covers the 14-17 year old age range group. We currently have 8 explorers (7 identifying as male and 1 as female), that feed in from both Potton and Gamlingay Scout Groups. Whilst we are not the largest Explorer section in the District, we are by no means the smallest. We, like other explorer sections, struggle with retention and we are not currently hitting national targets in relation to retention or inclusivity figures in our section (although at a District level, this figure may be different). We currently have a low feed in rate from scout sections and this is something that we are working with Group Scout Leaders to address.

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Explorers is one of the more challenging sections to lead, as this age range has lots of pressure on them due to school coursework and exams. As a result, we normally have 4-5 regular attendees at each section meeting. We now have 4 very experienced scout leaders supporting this section and the support of a parent when required. I want to take this opportunity to thank my leadership team. They all have demanding jobs and busy lives but volunteer to attend week on week for our young people. We also have the support of the wider Potton Scout Group leadership team for which we are extremely grateful.

Explorers is very much 'youth lead' in respect of the programme that is delivered. Up until November last year, this was very challenging to achieve but since the leadership team had a 'serious' conversation with the Explorers, great progress has been made. Now each term, the Explorers decide on activities they would like to undertake and write their own programme. As leaders, we support this in line with scouting policy and organisational rules, to ensure this is a balanced quality programme. In terms of the quality programme checker, we do offer opportunities for nights away, engagement with the local community and other explorer sections, but take up for these opportunities when offered is currently very low.

Progressing badges is also challenging mainly because of the cost involved in completing all the elements required within this age group. Many badge elements cannot be completed within normal meetings and require external activities that have a high additional cost that can't be met by subs payments. We are in a position where financing this either has to come from additional contributions from parents and carers or through fundraising - which we desperately need to do more of. However, the opportunity to gain badges through external activities remains and many explorers are engaged with the Duke of Edinburgh scheme at school. I am now working closely with the Assistant District Commissioner for Explorers to develop more joint activities and opportunities for our young people to engage with other Explorer sections from across the District.

Despite all of these challenges, we are extremely proud of our explorers. Two of our Unit have been selected to attend the World Scout Jamboree in Korea this year and we won the first District cooking competition in April. We also took part in the London Monopoly, where we travelled with 8,000 other Scouts by foot, train and bus, across London, visiting famous places and specially chosen monopoly locations.

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Our section has fun, we laugh and we talk about all sorts of issues. My strong leadership team supports the multifaceted challenges experienced by this age group and our young people know that we are there for them. Scouting gives them the opportunity to develop skills, relationships and experience opportunities that would not be open to them without being part of this wonderful movement called scouting.

Yours in Scouting

Hazel Biggs
Explorer Scout Leader

Chair's Report

Having only recently accepted the opportunity to become Chair of the 1st Potton Scout Group I appreciate that many on the committee may not know me so I'm taking this opportunity to briefly introduce myself.

I've known Andy Bargery, our GSL, for close to 10 years now, first meeting as a result of our eldest children becoming friends at pre-school. The enthusiasm Andy has shown for scouting, whether volunteering or not, has been infectious, likely contributing to the fact that my three children are all current members of the 1st Potton Scout Group. My Son a Scout and my Daughters a Cub and a Beaver. The experiences they've had, activities they've participated in and adventures they are continuing to have will certainly remain in their memories fondly.

Importantly, I recognise that the values Scouting brings align with my own approach to doing your best, being brave enough to try something new and behaving respectfully.

I believe that the Scouting community is uniquely placed, welcoming all young people from 4 year old Squirrels to 18 year old Explorers, instilling the values of trust, respect and cooperation into our young people and offering them opportunities for adventure that may otherwise be out of reach for many.

Although only halfway through the year there have been many fantastic events organised. The recent Coronation Camp is still talked about fondly in my household (even by those that didn't last the full distance) and it was great to see such a

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successful return of the St Georges Day parade, what a wonderful way to engage with the wider community and St Mary's Church.

Whilst there are certainly many more exciting adventures ahead there remain some challenges.

Potton 1st Scout Group is a registered charity and therefore requires a governing body. In April this year the Executive Committees became Trustee Boards. There is more to this than a simple rebrand and it is essential that we, as your board of Trustees understand and manage this change whilst ensuring we continue to operate in the best interests of all our members.

It has to be recognised that it is the role of volunteers that makes all of this possible and I'd like to offer a sincere thank you to every one of you.

I'm looking forward to giving something back to the Scouting community as a volunteer and encourage anyone reading this to consider how you might be able to do the same.

Sam Wilamowski
Chair

Treasurer's Report

For the year ending 31 March 2023, unfortunately the Scout Group has made a loss of £7,865.67.

This was largely due to income from activities being £5877.00, and the expenditure being £10,937.47. Also, the utilities have increased significantly since last year. Going forward we will monitor the accounts more closely.

I plan to double-check that all members are paying subs and it is planned to use OSM to track activity and subscription payments from parents.

Also, we have not yet received the gift aid payment for the tax year. This should be just over £1000.00. The fall in grants and donations is considerable as well and shows just how much we need a fund raising secretary in place.

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I would like to take this opportunity to thank you all for your support, as I am still learning the ropes all the time! But I do really appreciate everyone's guidance.

Julia Smith
Treasurer

Fundraising Secretary Report

We do not currently have a Fundraising Secretary, however, our dedicated team of volunteers has been very active raising funds for the Group including a Burns Night, selling burgers at Party on Potton and supporting the Potton Playhouse in hosting a very successful evening at the HQ.

I hope we can appoint a new Fundraising Secretary to support us during the next year.

Andy Bargery
Group Scout Leader

Quartermaster's Report

After not much to report over the last three years, for obvious reasons; all sections are back and working hard to give everyone the best experience we can offer.

The group has expanded with all sections using the gear we have, something only scouts and cubs tended to do previously. This is refreshing and should make it easier as they move through the group, with this in mind there have been a few purchases that makes it easier for nights away.

The main items are pop up gazebos, an additional gas-powered fridge, hand axes along with various safety items. We were also gifted large cooking and canvas patrol tents from a couple of groups that have sadly shut.

Every gas hose has been replaced as these are on a 5-year life cycle.

I'm in the process of removing old, outdated and in some cases dangerous gear and have been given permission to sell it to fund other purchases we'll need to make.

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If any section needs anything, can they please come to one of the Trustees with requests, if you can come to us with prices too that helps us out.

I'd also like to thank a couple of our unsung heroes of the group, Peter for his sterling efforts whenever a tent gets damaged and needs repair and Neil for his sharpening skills keeping knives and axes safe and ready to use.

Carl Sturges
Quartermaster

Booking Secretary's Report

We have had a good year with regards to the bookings and use of the HQ. We have a number of regular hirers; TJ's Dance class - weekly, Ensemble of friends choir - bi-weekly, Potton Karate - monthly and, as of September we will also have Rangers in every other week on a Thursday after Riverbank.

We also have a few ad hoc hirers, like Little city, the Bedfordshire Geological society, POP and Potton Dance Academy, as well as private hirers for birthday/anniversary parties etc.

We have also had Potton Playhouse in, back in November holding a murder mystery evening and raising over £1000 and they have already booked the HQ this October to hold another murder mystery evening.

Last weekend we had our first booking of the HQ from another scout group from outside of the district, they were a pleasure to have at HQ and even cleaned up after themselves 😊

Jess Cobb
Booking Secretary