**45th Cheltenham (Bethesda) Scout Group Annual General Meeting (AGM).**

**Group Lead Volunteer (GLV) Report – For period 30th September 2024 to 28th September 2025**

Good afternoon and a very warm welcome to both our Annual General Meeting (AGM) and our Centenary Activity Afternoon, here at Deer Park, Cowley.

**Introduction**

I would like to start my report, with a heart-felt thanks to everyone associated with our group, especially the tremendous work by the section leadership teams and the fantastic support of the trustee board, in making this, our Centenary year, a really special one!

Every year at Bethesda is busy; filled with fun and exciting activities designed to provide skills for life and lasting memories for everyone. But I feel that the extra special effort that has been put into the planning of both the individual sections meetings and the additional centenary events, has provided an even busier and fulfilling year for everyone associated with our Group. Without this brilliant team of dedicated volunteers who are pivotal in organising and delivering the opportunities for our Beavers, Cubs and Scouts – your sons and daughters, in developing life skills, team building, self-motivation, commitment, friendship and leadership, in a safe and friendly environment, then none of this would happen! This is also true for our Trustee Board members, without whom the Group wouldn’t function.

Over this past year, our membership numbers have again stayed consistent and now starting to increase, and we currently have over 100 young people enjoying the scouting family; again, this shows the dedication and effort that everyone connected with the group, has made to ensure we can continue to grow and thrive.

It’s continued to be a busy year for UK scouting too, which has been continuing to implement the o transformation of the scouting experience for both members and volunteers to reflect more accurately what we do and emphasis more clearly the volunteering aspect. The purpose is to actively engage and support more young people in their personal development, empowering them to make a positive contribution to society. Further to this, scouting has become the largest mixed youth organisation within the UK, helping more than 444,600 young people, experience challenging activities, unique experiences and assisting each of them to reach their full potential. In simplifying both the role and learning of new volunteers, bring everything together in the new digital system, the aim is to encourage even more people to volunteer (currently there are over a 140,000) and grow UK scouting even further

Our aims and vision for our Group aligns with the ethos of UK Scouting to actively engage and supports young people in their personal development, empowering them to make a positive contribution to society and learn the requisite skills for life. Combine this with acting with care, respect, integrity, cooperation, exploring our own and others’ beliefs throughout all that we do in providing a balanced and positive experience for everyone involved in Bethesda, Beavers, Cubs, Scouts, parents, leaders, trustee board members, and young leaders.

**Leaders**

It always inspires and makes me proud, that our leaders at Bethesda, are always passionate about what they do in providing a fantastic programme for their sections and to continue to freely give their time each week, to make this possible. This along with some changes within the district, is why I decided to continue with my role as Group Lead Volunteer, especially with it being our centenary year and I will continue to do so, for the forthcoming year.

We continue to be extremely fortunate to have a consistent and dedicated group of volunteer leaders, across our Beaver and Cub sections. Without their support and time, we wouldn’t be able to run our group. It’s that collective ethos and enthusiasm which allows the Bethesda group to continue. The imagination and resourcefulness the leadership teams have shown to run meetings has been amazing.

This is especially true of our Scout section, where at the beginning of last year we struggled in having sufficient leaders available to keep it running. But, with the collective help of leaders from across our other sections and trustees, plus myself, we managed to put a plan together which enable us to run the meetings through the year.

Unfortunately, we are still in the same situation at the beginning of this year, where we haven’t sufficient leaders to create a consistent dedicated team to run our Scout section; *we are currently relying on the goodwill and passion of other section leaders to ensure we can!* We are now in our 100th year of providing access to scouting for our community and sincerely hope to continue to this going forward…. *but given this situation, we NEED your HELP in ensuring we are able to!* *Please let me know if you are interest in helping or know of anyone who can.*

Remember, without volunteer leaders, we wouldn’t be able to run our weekly meetings, the activity days & weekends or the sleepovers and camp, so a sincere thank you to everyone - your input and time are very much appreciated.

**Overview**

Since our last AGM, all the sections have been working hard to provide the activities and fun moments, which lead to the life skills, which scouting is all about. This has been a mixture of typical scout-oriented meetings focused on gaining badges and skills, but also a mixture of team building games and external activities such as night hikes and camping.

At the end of November, we held our traditional joint Christmas Fayre with Bethesda Church, which again was a great success and an opportunity to get together with the Church community who support and provide us with the fabulous facilities, for our meetings. I would also like to thank the scouts and cubs who provided the excellent and friendly table service at the Fayre, which was greatly appreciated by everyone.

In early September we held our Book and Bric-a-brac sale.

**Centenary Celebrations**

We were also busy, planning out the events and activities for our centenary celebrations! This resulted in four group wide events being organised as well as activities for the sections to participate in. The first of these events was the Community Project, where each section chose a charity to champion and raised money for both the charities and our group by taking part in a sponsored cycle; this was a great success, enjoyed by everyone and took place on two of the warmest evening of June! Luckily this didn’t stop members cycling numerous times around Burrows Fields… Here are the details of the charities and monies raised:

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  |  | **Group income** | **Sections** |  |
|  |  | **Monday Beavers** | **Monday Cubs** | **Thursday Beavers** | **Thursday Cubs** | **Scouts** | **Totals:** |
| **Totals monies raised** | 190.00 | 688.00 | 701.00 | 705.00 | 1,045.00 | 424.00 | **3,753.00** |
| **Retained by Group** | 190.00 | 408.00 | 421.00 | 425.00 | 625.00 | 254.00 | **2,323.00** |
|  |  |  | **Charities** |  |
|  |  |  | **Air Ambulance** | **Cyclists Against Cancer** | **Open Doors** | **Blood Bikes** | **The Playhouse Theatre** |   |
| **40% to the Charities** | 280.00 | 280.00 | 280.00 | 420.00 | 170.00 | **1,430.00** |

Our second event was a very successful Summer BBQ, on another extremely warm July evening, where we had around 200 members, leaders, trustees, parents and friends attend. This was an opportunity for the sections to show off and fly their bottle rockets and kites they had made, especially for this event. I would like to say a big thank you to Leckhampton Primary School and their PTA too, for the use of the playground and facilities, which without we couldn’t of held this event.

Our third event is now! The activity afternoon here at Deer Park, Cowley where I hope everyone is enjoying the range of activities provided. Today’s event also provides the opportunity for us to handout our Centenary badge, which was chosen from the design competition held across all of the sections earlier in the year (our winning member will be announced too), along with our re-designed group neckerchief with a special Bethesda centenary logo embossed on the back. Both the badge and neckerchief are free to all our members and has been funded by the very generous donations made by one of our past members – Chris Read.

And the final event, is to be held at Cranham Scout Centre, where we will be planting a Rowan Tree and burying a time capsule, with items collected from each section which will provide a memory of our current time at Bethesda Scout group. This will be on Sunday 12th October – more details to follow. We will also be updating our Bethesda archives and creating a new centenary booklet.

**Trustee Board**

Our Trustee Board members who are equally as passionate in ensuring that the Group runs smoothly, providing the necessary guidance and administrative support to myself as GLV and to the sections when and where required. Without them, there would be no fund-raising events like the joint Church and Scout Group Christmas Fair and the Book & Bric-a-Brac sales - as well as managing our finances for both the group account and section funds, and over-seeing our equipment / resources and health & safety requirements.

I would like to make a special mention to Grainne Carpenter, who after many years as our group Treasurer is standing down; many thanks Grainne your contribution has been very much appreciated and best wishes for the future.

The Trustee Board meet typically six times a year and again are all volunteers, who either have been in Scouting previously or are parents keen to have an input and say in how the Group is run.

Therefore, many thanks for all your help and continuing support.

**Details of Activities and Events**

The leaders provided a wide variety of activities throughout each term. Typically concentrating on badge work and indoor activities during the Winter months, and then as the evenings become lighter and warmer (and hopefully drier!), more emphasis is given to outdoor meetings.

Below are some examples from each of the sections, in no particular order!

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| * Sleepovers / Camps
 | * Money Skills
 | * Map Skills
 |
| * Knots and lashings
 | * Bottle Rockets
 | * Night Hikes
 |
| * Animal Carers Badge
 | * Communications Badge
 | * Chip shop Challenge!
 |
| * Artist Badge
 | * Climbing
 | * Ten Pin Bowling
 |
| * Slot Car Racing
 | * Kite Making
 | * Bus Trip to Gloucester / Xmas Light
 |
| * Rounders
 | * Fire Station Visit
 | * Backwoods Cooking
 |
| * Entertainers Badge
 | * DIY Badge
 | * Navigator Badge and navigation skills
 |

The Beavers and Cubs had a pre-Christmas sleepover in December, at Cranham.

The Cubs had weekend ‘pack holiday’ in March and July too (at Woodhouse & Cranham respectively)

Unfortunately, the Scouts didn’t have any camps this year, due to the lack of leaders, but it’s our intention, where possible, to make sure they have the opportunities to camp next year.

**Thank you….**

During this financial period, I can report that all sections funds are being managed appropriately and being used to provide resources and activities to the Group. We are now seeing an increase in our waiting lists for joining Bethesda, which is always very encouraging, indicating that we are still very popular. Again, this is a testament to our Leaders and Trustee Board for the way they manage the Group.

Again, I would like to emphasise that all the leaders, trustees and our parent helpers volunteer their own time, to ensure the Group runs as smoothly as possible. Without such a great team to support everything we do, then we wouldn’t be able to impart our scouting philosophy in helping prepare your young people with those additional life skill, for their futures.

And, from a leader’s perspective, we are all extremely grateful and appreciative for the support and help with the weekly parent rotas, those who have helped more regularly and those few who have gone a step further to become part of our leadership teams. Many thanks to everyone; we really couldn’t do it without yourselves!

And, as alluded to earlier in this report, we would definitely appreciate any help or ideas / contacts that anyone can provide, in volunteering within the group on a more permanent basis. Please contact me via email – glv@bethesdascouts.co.uk or call me on 07946 529060 if you can help – many thanks.

**And finally….**

For more details about our group please visit our website - https://www.bethesdascouts.co.uk/

Please join me and give everyone a well-deserved round of applause!

Thank you.

**Steve Reis**

**Group Lead Volunteer.**