

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

Group Lead Volunteer (GLV) Report – For period 30th September 2025 to 19th September 2026

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

Introduction

The last twelve months have seen our scout group now reach over 120 members and this is forecasted to continue to rise over the next few years! This is extremely pleasing for everyone involved in the group and is testament to dedications and work that all our volunteer leaders, young leaders, group trustee board and yourselves put into supporting the group. Therefore, I want to start by saying a massive thank-you to everyone associated with Bethesda; without this support we wouldn't be able to continue to grow and provide the scouting ethos of ensuring our young people are prepared with the life skills they need in the future.

This year has also seen the continuation of our centenary celebrations, with the planting of a Rowan tree and the burying of our time capsule (each section and trustees had their own individual 'glass' capsule inside a large, sealed plastic pipe!) at Cranham in May; I would especially like to thank Kevin Jones for organising this alongside the trustees in my absence.

Every year at Bethesda is busy; filled with fun and exciting activities designed to provide life skills, friendships and lasting memories for everyone. Each year, the leaders always manage to plan new and exciting meetings and activities throughout the 3 terms, as well as finding ways of delivering the core skills of first aid, camp craft, team building, pioneering, map and navigation exercises in a fun, engaging and interactive way. 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 these skills, along with self-motivation, commitment and leadership, in a safe, friendly and inspirational environment, then none of this would happen! This is also the same for our Trustee Board members, without whom the Group couldn't function.

It's continued to be a busy year for UK scouting too, who have been shaping their strategy for the future and listening to our young people too, to enable them to focus on what we do best – giving our membership a place to belong and giving them skills to thrive – 'Young people have told us they want our support to empower them to navigate an unpredictable future. We need to prepare young people for a world with less stable geopolitics and rapid changes fuelled by tech like AI. More than ever, young people need the courage to learn and adapt when they need to.' Scouting has also been continuing to implement on the transformation of the scouting experience for 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 positive contribution to society. Scouting has become the largest mixed youth organisation within the UK, helping more than 444,682 young people and 152,000 volunteers experience challenging activities, unique experiences and assisting each other to reach their full potential.

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

Over the past year we have continued to have had a consistent and passionate group of volunteer leaders, across all our sections. Without this on-going dedication, time and support, we wouldn't be able to run the group. So, it continues to inspire and makes me proud, that our leaders at Bethesda, are always able to provide a fantastic programme for their sections, whilst giving their time freely each week, to make this possible.

We have one Monday Beaver leader, who is looking to step back from her role, towards the middle of next year due to work reasons and a Thursday Beaver leader, who is also stepping down. Therefore, we would really appreciate and encourage any parents, family, friends or colleagues to come forward to help us. *We NEED your HELP in ensuring that we are still able to continue running these two sections! Please let me know if you are interest in helping or know of anyone who can.*

And I would like to send our best wishes for a continuing and speedy recovery of Sam Coxson our Monday Cubs team leader, from a broken elbow and knee, caused by being knocked off his bike at the beginning of August.

Overview

All the sections have been working hard over the past year, to continue providing the meetings, activities and fun moments, which gives our young people a place to belong and thrive. 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 join 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 late April we held our Book sale, which was also very successful.

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.

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

At the start of every term, the leaders of each section have a meeting to plan out what activities, badge work, challenges and camps they will provide. Typically, during the winter months, the sections concentrate on badge work and indoor activities although night hikes, fire lighting and bus trips are also included. 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!

270 Climbing Wall	Creative (Chefs) Badge	Hike / Night Hike	Pioneering
Adventure Badge	Den building / pitching tents	Incident trail (Hatherley Park)	Plant pea plants
Air activities / paper planes	Diwali festival evening	Internet Safety	Rafting (Croft Farm)
Archery and Firefighting	DIY Badge	JOTI (chat with another international group)	Road Safety
Athletics (Prince of Wales Stadium)	Drinking Straws Challenge	Knife Skills	Scientist Badge
Bike Ride / Cake Sale	Expedition Prep and Training	Local Knowledge	Skill Badge
Bouldering	Expedition weekend	Map Skills	Slot Car Racing
Bus trip to Gloucester	Fire Station Visit	Mean of Easter	Space Badge
Cheltenham Graffiti Trail	Firefighting (with Prestbury Scouts)	Money Skills	Taskmaster
Christmas Party	First Aid / Games	Navigation	Team Building Games
Christmas Show	First Aid Update	Orienteering (Pitville Park)	Teamwork
Coca Cola Car Building (Electric)	Foreign Lawn Games	Outdoor Challenge Award	Visit of PCSO
Collectors Badge	Games Evening	Pack Holiday Mar 26	Winchcombe Sleepover
Cranham Camp	Guy Fawkes Night & Fire Safety	Parents v Cubs Rounders	World Badge
Cranham Sleepover (x2 with Beavers)	Help with Den Tidying	Patrol Evening (Teamwork / Values)	

The Cubs had a sleepover in Winchcombe in November which coincided with the Remembrance Day service which they attended and then the Beavers and Cubs had a pre-Christmas sleepover in December, at Cranham.

The Cubs had weekend 'pack holiday' in March and Summer camp in July too (at Cranham & Rhydd Covert near West Midlands Safari Park respectively)

The Scouts had an expedition weekend, based in Winchcombe and then a summer camp at Cranham.

And finally, the Beavers and Cubs had a long weekend adventure to Brownsea Island.

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. As mentioned already, we are now

seeing an increase in our waiting lists for joining Bethesda, which is always very encouraging, indicating that we are a popular group! 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 and values of integrity, respect, care, belief and cooperation, in helping prepare your son's and daughter's for their life's journey.

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, and please enjoy the rest of your day of activities.

Thank you.

Steve Reis

Group Lead Volunteer.