Scouts

Hertfordshire

County Review

2024

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- His Majesty's Lord Lieutenant of Hertfordshire - Robert Voss CBE CStJ

I consider it a great privilege to be President of Hertfordshire Scouts. As a keen Cub and Scout myself I very much enjoy seeing the amazing variety of activities enjoyed by many of the County's Scouts of all ages.

Attending the Green Beret event at Tolmers Activity Centre in November brought back memories of my Scouting days although I must say that today's modern tents are a lot easier to erect than those I recall struggling with in wet and windy conditions...!

I look forward to presenting some King's Scout Awards - the highest Youth Awards in Scouting - so congratulations to those achieving this great milestone.

And I must say how very much my wife and I enjoyed the Gang Show again this year so professionally put on by the Scouts of St Albans. The amount of effort and work put into producing this wonderful show is a testament to the dedication and hard work not only of the Scouts involved but the many volunteers active behind the scenes.

It is with a sense of pride that I note the strength of Scouting in Hertfordshire and must acknowledge the great support of the adult volunteers and parents without who many of the great activities could not take place.



- County Lead Volunteer - Ian Tycer



What a first year!! What amazing volunteers and staff we have !! Thank you all !!

I was honoured to be appointed as County Commissioner for Hertfordshire on 19th February. Four days later, exceptionally fast work by HQ, I attended the National Scout Thanksgiving Service at Westminster Abbey. The sermon, titled “It’s all your fault”, was given by the Bishop of Salisbury. He explained that his first attendance at church was as a Cub Scout, and this was how he found God and ultimately found himself in his current role. He gleefully explained that this also meant he is the Bishop of Brownsea Island, where Baden-Powell held his experimental camp for Scouts in 1907. A very timely reminder for me of the impact and influence that Scouting has on our members.

This message was reinforced a few weeks later at Windsor Castle where several hundred Explorer Scouts and Scout Network members paraded and celebrated the highest achievement of the King’s Scout Award; two powerfully emotive events at the start of my term in office that I’ve used to give direction in our county plan, ie., providing #Skills for Life to more young people, and which I cherish when days become a bit bumpy!! More on that later.

Consequently, to share this direction I tried to visit as many parts of the county as possible, attending AGMs, camps, Gang Shows, carol services, activity centres – including a trip in the Herts Scouts Glider, and a whole ten minutes at Lochearnhead Station, having co-delivered dinghies before heading back south. Wherever I have gone I’ve been met with enthusiastic leaders and inspired young people, all thoroughly enjoying themselves. I could not be luckier to be overseeing all this wonderful work, thank you!!

November saw the new membership system delivered and with it the new structure for adult volunteers to work to. Unfortunately, this has been more challenging than expected and provided some of those bumps in the road mentioned earlier. However, they do make it easier to demonstrate that we are safely delivering #Skills for Life. I’d like to take this opportunity to thank everyone for their resilience as we continue to navigate through the obstacles that these present.

Looking back over 2024 to collate my thoughts reinforces the realisation of the privilege I’ve been so fortunate to be given. Thank you to everyone involved in supporting this glorious organisation.







- Member Statistics - Hertfordshire Scouts

17,961 members

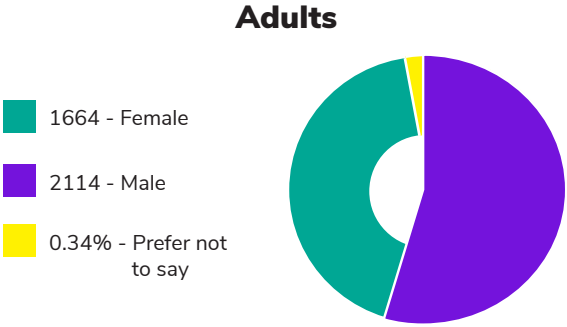
Male	12,228
Female	5,566

*0.93% of Members self identify/prefer not to say

Young People

	2024	2025	Growth	Boys	Girls	Not Stated
Squirrels	353	571	61.7%	396	169	6
Beavers	3448	3364	-2.4%	2495	810	59
Cubs	4422	4302	-2.7%	3130	1126	46
Scouts	3880	4096	5.6%	2939	1135	22
Explorers	1475	1514	2.6%	948	550	16
Network	324	323	-0.3%	206	112	5
Total	**13,902**	**14170**	**1.9%**	**10114**	**3902**	**154**

Adults



- Awards -

YOUTH AWARDS

 Chief Scout's Award Acorn	107
 Chief Scout's Award Bronze	868
 Chief Scout's Award Silver	737
 Chief Scout's Award Gold	339
 Chief Scout's Award Platinum	65
 Chief Scout's Award Diamond	40
 King's Scout Award	12
 Young Leaders' Belt Buckle	18
 Duke of Edinburgh Award Bronze	98
 Duke of Edinburgh Award Silver	45
 Duke of Edinburgh Award Gold	19

ADULT AWARDS

 Bar to Silver Acorn	1
 Silver Acorn	5
 Bar to Award for Merit	12
 Award for Merit	48
 Chief Scout's Commendation for Good Service	58
 Chief Scout's Commendation for Meritorious Conduct	1

- The King's Scout Award - by Michael Cranfield

From across Hertfordshire, fifteen members achieved the King's Scout Award in 2024. For this, the highest award in Scouting, members need to complete the award before they reach 25 years of age, and this year five Explorers gained the award before their 18th birthdays. To complete the award they need to be members as Explorers / Network for 18 months, and complete

- 24 nights away,
- five challenges relating to skill, physical activity, volunteering, expedition and residential,
- complete six activities linked to the set International and Community Value lists (two from each), and
- give a presentation covering the activities completed for the award.

Congratulations for gaining the award in 2024 go to:
Peter Armstrong, Bonnie Mander, Rosie Muge, Simon Kitching, Adam Greenstreet, Benjamin Whiting, Joanna Whitehead, Aaron Powell, Shireen Bakry, Samuel Chamberlain, Oliver Dellow, Jessica Cox, Isabelle Lehner, Ava Lehner and Samuel Penn.

In April 2024 Hertfordshire Scouts held a 'Top Awards Dinner' for Queen's and King's Scout Award holders who achieved the award in 2023, pictured below with Ian Tycer (Hertfordshire Scouts Lead Volunteer). These award holders were also invited to the St George's Day parade at Windsor Castle.



Fire & Ice

Camping in the cold wintery weather with many activities and fireworks to end the day.





BITS (Beavers in Tents)

An overnight stay for Beavers in Tents including activities at Well End.





ECF (Explorer Chill Fest)

Inflatables, popcorn and more. Explorers enjoyed hours of fun jumping and eating.





CTT (Come To Tolmers)

A week of onsite and offsite activities including a trip to Southend-on-Sea.





ASAP (Activity Spectacular at Phasels)

An activity spectacular weekend at Phasels Wood for all ages.






Green Beret Challenge

Scouts had the chance to complete different bases including an assault course in the bid to win the Challenge!





SQUIRRELS (4-6 years)

Hertfordshire continues to see strong growth in the Squirrel section moving from 22 dreys at the start of the year to 34 dreys by the end of the year. Squirrels enjoy fun and creative activities with little adventures along the way.

BEAVERS (6-8 years)

Our Beavers had great fun at two very successful Beavers in Tents (BITs) event at Well End where they took part in one night away with a camp fire. During the day they enjoyed soft archery, climbing, inflatables, craft activities, crazy golf and many other activities. Many thanks to our sites team for putting on these events and to all those who came along to ensure the Beavers had a great time.

CUBS (8-10.5 years)

Our Cubs took part in several events during the year. In March, our Bushcraft event was fully booked and saw over 300 Cubs enjoying firelighting, cooking, nature trails and rope making. Our ever popular Water Activities day in June had 240 Cubs on the water and earning their first Nautical Skills and Paddlesports badges. My thanks to Wendy Tierney and her team for making all these events possible.

SCOUTS (10.5-14 years)

The highlight of the Scouts' year is the amazing Green Beret Competition, now in its 39th year and a sell-out as always. 1000 Scouts and adults descended on Tolmers Scout Activity Centre for 24 hours of competition involving an assault course, orienteering challenge, day activity bases and night activity bases. Starting at 7.00am and finishing at 11.00pm, teams of six Scouts battled it out to be the best overall team. For once, the weather was rather mild, the scores were high and several teams shared the trophies. My thanks to Doug and all his team for helping to make this event safe and exciting for all our Scouts.

All of the above events would not be possible without the support of many volunteers who have carefully planned and safely delivered these activities to thousands of Squirrels, Beavers, Cubs and Scouts. My thanks to everyone involved in the Programme Team for their commitment ensuring we provide the very best opportunities for those who 'Scout' in Hertfordshire.

Richard Haynes
Programme Team Lead







- 14-24 County Team -

2024 saw more activities provided from the County Programme Team than the previous year, with a clear vision of providing things that cannot be organised locally within Districts.

January saw the Herts Monopoly Run being delivered in London with a theme of animals. Over 380 Explorers and adults were involved in the event and a great time was had by all in practising urban navigation skills. As always, we are extremely grateful to one of our trustee's who enabled us to use their business premises as the start/finish point.

April saw our first Top Awards Dinner since before the pandemic. For more information on our celebration please see Michael's report on page 5.

In July we tried something completely new, based on demand and requests from Explorers via their leaders and delivered Explorer Chill Fest. This was designed as a fun, one night camp with various different activities to participate in during the afternoon. These included a bucking bronco, water wars, clay pigeon shooting, hook a duck, face painting, an inflatable assault course and many more. In the evening a film, camp fire or silent disco were offered for the Explorer to move between depending on their preference. This proved to be a successful end of term / exam period celebration for 180 Explorer and will be delivered again next year.
At the same weekend we offered the Network and all 14-24 leaders a social camp on the Friday night before the Explorers arrived on the Saturday. This was not well attended by Network, however we will offer it again for one more year to see if attendance increases as we have been asked to provide more occasional social offerings.

In October, Herts Peak Assault took place, this time in Hertfordshire. This change was driven by several factors: the rising cost of transport and feedback highlighting that the cost to participants was prohibiting entry for some. The different location did not deter participation and did enable some Explorers to be able to enter for the first time because the entry cost was significantly reduced or because the event was more local. In 2025 we will return to the hills. However the challenge to provide this type of unique event, where logistics are a key cost and safety is our top priority, and at a lower cost is not easy in the present economic situation.

In November, the 14-24 team was asked to support Green Beret, the Scout Section's County competition. Traditionally many Explorer have assisted at the event, but there had been a gap in accounting for some of these Explorers from an event management and safety standpoint. To support this, a new Explorer sub-camp was created (at fairly short notice) to ensure that all Explorers knew that there were dedicated adults to support them if they were attending without a leader. The 14-24 team will collaborate with the Green Beret organisers and District Explorer Teams to ensure that all members from the Explorer section enjoy the best and safest experience.

Jo Haynes
14-24 Team Lead
Hertfordshire Scouts

- Former County Youth Lead - Kayleigh Malone

In 2024 our Youth Commissioner, Kayleigh Malone, continued to promote Youth Shaped Scouting. She started the year supporting the recruitment of our new County Lead Volunteer, Ian Tycer, focussing on youth-based issues as an integral part of the recruitment process.

She also attended numerous County events, ran Youth Lead sessions to promote YouShape Scouting and gained feedback on general Scouting issues. These included the Monopoly Run, Green Beret, the Top Awards Dinner celebrating those who achieved the highest award in Scouting as well as a variety of fundraisers supporting Explorer Belts and Scout International Camps.

Kayleigh was also a member of the County's Trustee Board contributing to decisions at the highest level about the direction of Scouting throughout the County.

During 2024 the title Youth Commissioner changed to Youth Lead in accordance with the Transformation Initiative and our District Youth Leads, together with the County Youth Lead attended training events with the UK Youth Lead team during the year. While at the Gilwell Reunion Kayleigh got the opportunity to share best practice and network with other Youth Leads.

As Kayleigh's term as the County Youth Lead was coming to an end she was involved in the recruitment for a new Youth Lead. The process actively engaged Young People in having a say on who would be the new County Youth Lead. Neo Moise was subsequently appointed, and the handover of the role was completed at the start of January 2025.

The County is deeply indebted to Kayleigh for the pioneering way in which she developed the County Youth role and we wish her every success in her future endeavours.





- County Youth Lead -
Neo Moise



As County Youth Lead, my goal is to ensure that Young People's voices remain at the heart of our County's decisions and program development. I am committed to creating meaningful opportunities for youth participation, ensuring that their perspectives shape the direction of our activities and policies.

Over the coming year, I plan to strengthen youth engagement by holding local forums and feedback sessions. These sessions will provide a platform forour youth members to share their views, so that their input can directly and meaningfully influence County planning.

By increasing youth representation in decision-making meetings and supporting initiatives, we can empower young members to take on leadership roles. Collaboration with both young members and adult leaders will be key in building an inclusive and dynamic County structure where every voice matters.

I look forward to working with the team to make this vision a reality.

- International - Peter Makewell

2024 was another busy year for International Scouting in Hertfordshire with 159 Scouts, Explorers, Network members and leaders travelling abroad.

The trips included a County-led Explorer Belt expedition to Finland and Sweden and the Headquarters Roverway event that took a patrol to Norway.

Hertfordshire Groups travelled to Switzerland, Netherlands, Ireland and Czech Republic and delivered some fantastic events and there are reports from participants elsewhere in the Review.

The 3rd St Albans Griffin Cubs continued to raise funds for the Scouts of Ghana to purchase another 350 mosquito nets, as part of the Scouts Against Malaria campaign. Hertfordshire County Scouts provided badges and certificates to 60 of the local Scouts in Ghana who undertook the distribution of nets and spent time teaching the local people how to use them.

Scouting has undergone much change in 2024 with new names for all the roles and an enhanced focus on safe Scouting. As a result, it would be very easy for our leaders to say that taking Scouts abroad has become much too difficult. For that reason, my personal thanks go out to all the leaders who continue to work through all the new processes to deliver amazing events all over the world for Hertfordshire participants. I am also very grateful to all those leaders who deliver all the aspects of the Global and International programme to all the sections every week in Hertfordshire, with inspiring activities that help our young people become better world citizens.

Peter Makewell
County International Team Leader

- International -
Hertfordshire Visits Abroad 2024



Group	Destination	Beavers	Cubs	Scouts	Explorers	Network/ SASU & Others inc Guides	Leaders & Helpers	Total
Royston ESU	Czechia	0	0	0	17	0	3	20
Mid Herts Scouts	Switzerland	0	0	24	0	0	6	30
1st Hitchin Explorers	Ireland	0	0	0	12	0	5	17
Bishop's Stort-ford Voyager ESU	Netherlands	0	0	0	19	0	7	26
Hemel Hempstead District	Switzerland	0	0	15	26	2	13	56
Hertfordshire County Explorer Belt	Finland/ Sweden	0	0	0	8	0	2	10
	Totals	**0**	**0**	**39**	**82**	**2**	**36**	**159**

- International -
TRIP TO KAPRÁLŮV MLÝN, CZECHIA 2024













Royston District Explorers jetted off to Kaprálův Mlýn Scout Environmental Education Centre and campsite in Brno, Czechia, in the summer of 2024. We flew from Stansted Airport to Vienna, Austria where we stayed the night, and the following day travelled by coach to the Scout campsite at Kaprálův Mlýn where we camped for the week.

Being an international campsite, we met Scouts from the Netherlands, Austria and Spain, as well as Czechia.

We participated in many adventurous Scouting activities, including hiking, water zorbing and caving (which involved getting covered in mud!), as well as spending a day exploring the city of Brno. In Brno, we visited a science museum, which was tremendously fun and was more like a playground than a museum, as well as having free time in groups to explore. We also explored a cold war nuclear bunker, learning a little bit of history as well as dressing up!

We had another day off site visiting the nearby valley and the cave systems. We started with a tour around the area where the old watermills used to be, finding out about water movement through the rocks and cave formation. We also went to see the gorgeous gorge and inside the cave systems, this included a trip on a boat. Finally we made our way up the valley in a cable car before heading back to the campsite.

We drew the camp to a close with a final evening meal in a Czech restaurant in Brno, before setting off the next day back on the coach to the airport in Vienna. It was a great Scouting adventure, and we would all like to thank our amazing leaders for organising and supporting us, we all had a fantastic time and can't wait for our next international camp to the Netherlands in 2025!

Written by Samuel Dominey,
Granta Explorers,
Royston District











- International -
3rd St Albans Griffins Cubs raising money for SAM

2024 was the third year that 3rd St Albans Griffin Cubs have raised money for Scouts Against Malaria. Over that time, we have raised over £5,000 and distributed over 2,000 nets to help families protect themselves from malaria. This year we raised money via a community car wash (lots of fun, and luckily, no scratched cars!) and tied fundraising to the Cubs Personal Challenge badge. They baked and sold cakes, did sponsored runs, reading and litter picks, climbed mountains and various other tasks that raised over £1000. This money was then sent directly to a Scout Group (Anbariyya) in Tamale, Northern Ghana, which then purchased and distributed 300 nets to the Zang community located in Yendi Municipality. The distribution also included education on malaria (disease and prevention) and the proper use and set up of the nets.

The distribution was led by Inzaghi Zakiw, Commissioner for the Northern Region of the Ghanaian Scouts who commented:

“The purpose of the visit was to educate the people on the causes of malaria, effects and its prevention and also to distribute mosquito nets. The Scouts were well received by the Chief and his people, who showed appreciation for taking the time to visit their community. A short drama display by the Yendi Scouts highlighted the causes, effects and prevention of malaria and also the proper use of the mosquito nets. It’s always a pleasure to see smiles on the faces of people as a result of the impact of Scouts on their lives”






- International -
1st Hitchen Explorers Expedition to Ireland

Seventeen Explorers and Leaders set sail from Holyhead to Dublin for 1st Hitchin Explorer Scout Unit's summer expedition to the Wicklow Mountains in Ireland. We travelled in three cars with a luggage trailer, which helped us meet the post-Brexit EU requirements when taking Unit kit into the Republic of Ireland.

We stayed at Lough Dan Scout Centre at a marvellous large campsite on the shores of the loch. There were good facilities at the campsite, but we were regularly visited by midges! We spent two days walking in the beautiful mountains, wild camping and had a day kayaking on Lough Dan and having fun on and in the water. Our mountain biking session was thoroughly enjoyed, and we were given expert tuition on the skills needed for this sport. We made use of trams and buses whilst participating in a Dublin Monopoly run, organised by Aaron, which used the sites on the actual game board.

Other cultural activities included visits to towns and a large sculpture exhibition in a wood, plus the usual camp fires and toasting marshmallows!

The weather was generally kind, with limited rain, which is good for Ireland. Our return to Hitchin on our last day was helped with a dry morning to pack up camp, but this was still a very long day with the ferry crossing and the drive from Holyhead to Hitchin. We arrived home in the early hours of the morning with tired Explorers, who had had a remarkable and thoroughly enjoyable Ireland expedition.

Although there were challenges in taking the group outside of the UK, the preparations by leaders were very thorough and meant a relatively stress-free experience!



- International -
Hemel Explorers to Kandersteg, Switzerland

On 27th July 2024 53 members of Hemel Hempstead District embarked on a 12-day trip to the Kandersteg International Scout Centre the “permanent mini-Jamboree in the heart of the Swiss Alps.” Whilst there the Explorers took part in adventurous activities including hiking, riding the Rodelbahn, Canyoning, white water rafting, Via Ferrata, with our two Network participants having a morning paragliding. There was also plenty of opportunity for cultural activities including celebrating the Swiss national day and a day trip to Bern, and KISC also put on a number of activities such as campfires and the international BBQ to encourage mixing between the various nationalities present. It’s the second trip the District has organised and, as with the previous trip, the Explorers reported they had an excellent time and gained many new experiences. A big thanks to all those adults that made the trip possible.



- International -
Voyager ESU, Scoutcentrum Buitenzorg, Netherlands



In July 2024, Voyager Explorer Unit held its Summer Camp at Scoutcentrum Buitenzorg which is situated around 30km southeast of Amsterdam. Our intention was to have a relaxed camp taking the opportunity to experience another country together with a good range of activities.

Everyone cycles in the Netherlands, so we decided to ride bikes around the trails in the forest close to the campsite. The torrential rain threatened to dampen spirits, but to us it felt like a home away from home! There is also an excellent high ropes course in the forest which we recommend.

At the campsite we spent time doing bushcraft activities, cooking on open fires and getting to know the other Scouts (mainly Dutch) camping at Buitenzorg.

Other activities during the week included a hike to the beach which was more challenging than expected due to some of the footpaths being blocked! After a few detours, everyone arrived at the beach on the hottest day of the week where the cold North Sea helped everyone cool off.



We went into Amsterdam a couple of times to do some sightseeing. This included a talk and tour of the Anne Frank Museum which is a very moving and powerful experience. This is not to be missed.

On our penultimate day, we went to the Efteling; the Dutch answer to Alton Towers! Again, we all got drenched, but flying around at 40mph was a great way to dry off!

We finished our week in the Netherlands in traditional style – an all-you-can-eat pancake cruise around Amsterdam. The pancake makers just about kept pace with our Explorers!

Bishops Storford - Voyager ESU

- International -
Explorer Belt 2024 - Finland/Sweden

The Explorer Belt is a 10-day expedition offered by UK Scouting to those aged 16 and over. It is a chance to explore somewhere outside of the UK in a small team and experiencing a new culture while gaining new skills and completing projects.

We had an interesting start to our expedition as on landing in Helsinki, Finland we found out that our bags had not been on the plane with us and were still somewhere in Heathrow airport. To distract from this, we went to a traditional Finnish summer house that a friend of our hosts owned right next to a lake, complete with two saunas and a hot tub! We ate Finnish sausages, went swimming in the lake, and spent a while in the traditional smoke sauna. Our hosts gave us Finnish crepes, served with cream and jams, and we had conversations about Finnish culture. We borrowed bedding and shirts, and slept on mattresses in the basement.

We visited Helsinki for a day and after a further night without our kit at a local nature reserve, we were re-united with our bags and continued with our planned route. We took the train to the town of Tampere and then northwards through Finland.

We finally arrived at our crossing point to Sweden on day 6 where we took the ferry from Vaasa in Finland to Umea in Sweden. This was followed by an overnight train south back through Sweden.

One of the highlights of the trip was to visit an island owned by the Stockholm Scout District, called Vassaro. The Swedish Scouts kindly let us camp for free and even feed us breakfast lunch and dinner! Another highlight on Vassero was something called Fika. Fika is an opportunity for people to sit down with friends and family, drink coffee or tea, with something sweet on the side – an amazing experience of hospitality and friendship. From the island we got back on the ferry and headed off to Stockholm. There we were hosted for two more days by Swedish Scouts who let us stay in a Scout owned house and spent the time with us around Stockholm.

We had a great time, embracing a completely different culture and exploring an environment so different to the UK. Also, the food was great, and the independence was so different to any Scout event I'd been to before. I highly recommend the experience.



by Jemma







- Activities -

2024 was an exciting year for adventurous activities in Hertfordshire for a variety of reasons.

Our inaugural HSME (Hertfordshire Scouts Mountaineering Experience) at Lochearnhead Scout Station took place across the Easter fortnight. HSME was born from the nearly 50 year legacy of our previous Mountaineering Courses at Lochearnhead, IMC and AMC. With a changing training requirement, skillset and ages wanting to attend, the courses needed to evolve. An organisation team formed from previous instructors and some new blood developed and led an oversubscribed 2 weeks of training from novices through to those wanting to expand their skills. These participants were Explorers, Network and Adult Leaders.
HSME 2024 was a fantastic success and has set a great base to continue delivering programmes such as this in the future.

In a similar way, we launched a new set of Hillwalking and Climbing training weekends. We recognised that more opportunities for Hillwalking and Climbing training needed to be provided, and while our location in Hertfordshire throws up some challenges, these events showed the strong demand and we are building on this in 2025 and beyond.

Not everything happens on land, our water teams continue to deliver fantastic opportunities afloat (mostly). Our May Sailing Week is always popular with young people and adults, 2024 was no exception to this. The feedback from this event continues to be overwhelmingly positive. Similarly, we have reshaped and relaunched the activities that surround the Hertfordshire Scouts Motor Glider, based out of Gransden in Cambridgeshire. The demand for this always outstrips supply, we only have the one glider and a limited number of pilots. We continue to identify ways to expand our offer in the air.

With the increased recent focus on safety, demand for more training opportunities drives the requirement for more trainers and assessors. This is happening not just in the adventurous activities Hertfordshire has traditionally offered. We are seeing an increased interest in Archery for instance and have increased the number of qualified assessors as a result. We are also seeing wider interest in activities such as Skiing, Snowboarding, Stand Up Paddleboarding and even Surfing!

Demand for adventure was well and truly alive in Hertfordshire in 2024, and continues whether that is on land, in the air, or on water, even frozen water!

Dan Nathan
Team Leader, Support & Activities Teams

- Activity Centres -

PHASELS WOOD ACTIVITY CENTRE

TOLMERS ACTIVITY CENTRE

LOCHEARNHEAD SCOUT STATION

Well End Activity Centre

Our Activity Centres welcomed almost 150,000 visitors during 2024. Residential experiences are at the forefront of our delivery and groups visit from all over the UK to enjoy the variety of facilities we offer. With nearly 8,500 activity slots delivered during the year, rafting, archery, climbing and tunnels remained our most popular. Events at our centres included Fire & Ice, Bushcraft, CTT, ASAP, Peak Assault and Green Beret Challenge. Lochearnhead continues to host the Hertfordshire Easter Mountaineering Experience and Hertfordshire Scout Districts during the school summer holidays, with local Scout Groups using the Station at weekends throughout the year.

Looking forward to 2025, Seymour pod village is coming to Phasels Wood later in the year, giving youth members pods of 8 and leaders individual rooms with a toilet/shower in pods of 3 and a catering hall seating 80 people. Additionally, a revamped Jubilee, now The Oaks, will provide a large dining and separate kitchen for group and family camping. Tolmers is hosting MSF - Muslim Scout Fellowship - again in the summer as well as County Beaver and Cub day and their own popular events. Well End has a raft of County programme events booked again including Beavers in Tents, Cubs in Tents and Chill Fest. Lochearnhead continues to be a unique place to stay and create magical memories. We are also attending large scale Scouting events in Cornwell, Sussex, Kent and Norfolk with our mobile activity equipment.

Without the dedication of our Volunteer Team, Activity Team, Activity Team Leads, Catering Team and Facilities Team all led by our Experience Managers, our centres wouldn't be able to offer these amazing events, facilities and activities to young people.







There are 18 Scout Districts in Hertfordshire. Here are a selection of reports submitted by some of the Districts headlining their activities, trips and camps during 2024.

Reports from:

Letchworth, Baldock & Ashwell

Harpenden & Wheathamsptead

Watford North

Hemel Hempstead

Hitchin

Hertford

- Districts -
Letchworth, Baldock & Ashwell

2024 in Letchworth, Baldock and Ashwell has been another busy year full of events that our young people continue to enjoy.

Here are some of the highlights; there is no way I could fit all of them on this page!

Our annual District fundraising walk was enjoyed by families of all ages (including pets) and was a huge fundraising success for our Groups.

Our first Squirrel Drey opened in 2024 but this didn't stop them from filling a cinema screening on the 10th Birthday of the animated tv series Hey Duggee. I'm sure many more adventures are to come with this new section.

Our Beavers had the opportunity to attend a trip to Shepreth Wildlife Park. Using the train and navigating around wild animals certainly sounds like useful #SkillsForLife.

Our Cubs not wanting to be outdone by the Beavers decided they would go on a trip to Gulliver's Land. I've been told they went on some wild rides!
The Scouts had lots of opportunities to put on their boots and head out into the darkness, The Scouts' annual Night Jar competition is a firm favourite and after a few years of not being run it looks like it is here to stay for the foreseeable future.

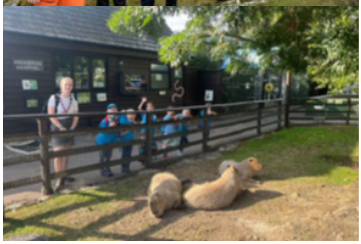
Hiking seems to be the theme with our older sections! The District Explorer sections collaborated on a few events this year, most notably a long weekend to Coetmor Mill where hills were climbed and caves were crawled through.

Its been a busy year filled with laughs in Letchworth, Baldock & Ashwell. We are very much looking forward to the next one!

Thanks to our volunteers for making all this possible!

Robert Coldrey
District Lead Volunteer





All the Explorer Units in the District were invited to take part in the 2024 summer camp at Lochearnhead, Scotland.

Over 80 Explorers and 26 leaders (including some guest leaders with appropriate activity permits) enjoyed and delivered a range of activities that included: hill walking on Munros, paddle boarding and canyoning around the local loch.

Nerves were tested and team work developed as they experienced high ropes at a local activity centre (similar to Go Ape), climbing and axe throwing.

On the domestic front, each day a new team of Explorers experienced the importance of time keeping, team work and managing tasks as they worked in the kitchen, preparing and serving meals for over 100 people at each meal time. This task included waking up very early and arriving to prepare and cook for breakfast through to the cleaning and clearing away after each meal. Customer service (including handling dietary requirements) and serving skills were also tested and developed each day.

Finally, as the camp drew to a close, everyone visited the local town, Stirling, and then enjoyed an evening of dancing to a local Ceilidh band.

The long (all day) return journey from camp seemed to pass by much more quickly than the outward journey, probably due to everyone being exhausted from investing fully in all the activities!







- Districts -
Hemel Hempstead

2024 was a year of change, when we adopted the new method of working as a team early, because we were without a District Commissioner. That didn't stop a full and varied District program for our young people to enjoy; badge days for Beavers and Cubs, swimming gala, hockey competition, bushcraft courses for all, Pinewood Derby, Ready Steady Cook, St Georges Day/promise renewal, sailing sessions at Bury Lake, sixer/seconder day, and Nimrod, not of course forgetting all the fantastic opportunities and events the individual groups in Hemel Hempstead arranged over weekends and every week.

Our Explorer Units, (we have 2 plus Young Leaders) all enjoyed varied activities including support to achieve Duke of Edinburgh Bronze, Silver and Gold as well as support in six of our Explorers achieving their King's Scout Award.

In July, the District, under the stewardship of Graham Drabble, organized a very successful ten-day trip to the permanent International Jamboree site in Kandersteg, Switzerland.



- Districts -
Watford North

Watford North got off to a strong start in 2024, with 620 young people across nine Groups—a 13% increase on the previous year. In April, I proudly took over from Dave Collette as District Lead Volunteer and have enjoyed every moment since.

One of our key milestones this year was the opening of a new Muslim-led Scout Group, reflecting our ongoing commitment to inclusion and community growth, but undoubtedly, the highlight of the year was our District trip to Lochearnhead.

Eighty-seven Scouts, Explorers and leaders from Watford North and Melton Mowbray took part in what became a truly unforgettable adventure. As the main group headed home, a few of us remained behind to 'switch the lights out.' Standing on the platform, we shared a collective sigh of relief—tinged with a little sadness—as eighteen months of planning came to an end.

During the trip, our young people (and leaders!) accomplished remarkable feats:

Summiting eight Munros
Climbing the equivalent of eight times the height of Mount Everest
Spending a total of 64 nights wild camping
Cycling 850 miles
Sailing 500 miles on Loch Earn (with every participant spending at least five hours on the water)
Building rope bridges
Cooking on open fires
Playing a live-action game of Monopoly in Stirling
And enjoying a well-earned day at a local activity centre.

Our vehicles covered more than 5,000 miles to support these incredible adventures.

As we look ahead, the District continues to go from strength to strength. With an inspiring new team and a refreshed trustee board in place, I'm excited to see what 2025 brings—full of new opportunities, fresh ideas, and continued growth.

Jack Mawhinney
District Lead Volunteer



- Districts -
Watford North - Lochearnhead Trip

The District Trip to Lochearnhead - A personal reflection.

A day for our young participants began early, with a wake-up call at 7:15, followed by a flag break at 7:45. However, our dedicated catering team had already been hard at work for over an hour, preparing breakfast and laying out the many choices for our packed lunches.

After a hearty breakfast, the nine patrols were ready to embark on their adventures. During our stay, our young people (and leaders) achieved remarkable feats, including summiting eight Munros and collectively climbing the equivalent of eight times the height of Mount Everest, all while spending a total of 64 nights wild camping in the mountains. They also cycled 850 miles, sailed 500 miles on Loch Earn—each participant spending at least five hours on the water—built rope bridges, cooked on open fires, played live Monopoly around Stirling, and enjoyed a day at a local activity centre. Our vehicles covered a total of 5,000 miles during the event to support these activities.

Each day upon our return to 'The Station', we were welcomed onto the platform by an array of freshly prepared cakes and buns. This was a favourite time of the day as everyone gathered to share stories about where they had been, what they had seen, and what they had achieved. Oh, and also who they had met; we are a friendly bunch. Our evening meals were themed two-course dinners which one evening included homemade burgers, fries and slaw for a "USA night," complete with McDonald's-style packaging—a detail the duty Patrol appreciated that evening.

Throughout the trip, we consumed a substantial quantity of food, including countless loaves of bread, over 600 rolls, 640 sausages, 826 rashers of bacon, and 760 slices of cake. We even enjoyed locally caught haggis! After dinner, we prepared for the next day's activities before enjoying some leisure time with events such as a games night, a quiz night, an 'alternative' Highland Games evening and a music night. Beyond the physical achievements, the young participants acquired valuable life skills such as learning to ride a bike, casting a fly-fishing rod, and even mastering the art of using clingfilm. Our Scouts and Explorers accomplished enough in ten days to earn a total of 500 badges.

We hope that the experiences and practical skills gained during this expedition will not be left behind at Lochearnhead Station and will serve as a source of inspiration to do more and to continue to build on what we have achieved.

I would personally like to thank all the adult leaders who gave up their time, not just for the duration of our stay at the station, but also during the months of preparation beforehand and the weeks afterward, helping make 'Great Things Happen.'

By Dave Collette
Station Master, Watford North











Hitchin

As usual in Hitchin, we started 2024 with our annual celebration evening. Last year, we had over 170 top awards, from Squirrels to Explorers.

We also got out and about a lot as a District. Hiking is always a Scouting favourite and in 2024 we sent Explorers to the Cotswolds Marathon, held Bronze and Silver D of E expeditions, a District Cub hike, a Scout night hike and an Explorer walking weekend in the Peak District



- 3 Acorn Awards
- 79 Bronze Awards
- 65 Silver Awards
- 9 Gold Awards
- 4 Platinum Awards
- 1 Diamond Award
- 8 Young Leader Belts
- 1 King's Scout Award

During the week, we ran weekly climbing and archery sessions and sailing taster sessions at the Blue Lagoon in the summer.



Over the year, we also had various District trips and camps. We had our annual Beaver sleepover with almost 100 Beavers taking part, a space themed Cub weekend with 180 Cubs at Boyd Field, over 150 Beavers and Cubs visiting Duxford in June, an Explorers and Scouts trip to RIAT Airshow in July and a Beaver Christingle service in December. Sadly, there isn't room for photos of everything!



- Districts -
Hertford

We started the year with a District conference at Gilwell Park, sharing ideas on transformation, programme delivery standards and digital tools. We also enjoyed meeting other team members whilst visiting the Gilwell Heritage Trail.

Hertford has a strong team of Young Leaders across most of our Groups who, whilst some are completing their DofE service or Chief Scout's Award, teach the Beavers and Cubs Scouting Skills.

We saw some Section numbers go down due to adults leaving and the challenge of finding new team members, but I was delighted to see a new Cub Pack open with a full team of adult support.

Peter Knight continues to provide a range of District activities that are enjoyed by our young people including the Cub swimming gala, Ready Steady Cook and Scout Patrol Challenge weekend. Sadly, the Scout and Guide night hike was cancelled at the last minute due to exceptionally poor weather creating unsafe conditions in the autumn.

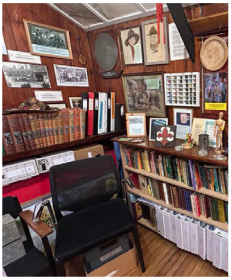
We participated in the County Green Beret Competiton and the new look Peak Assault at Phasels Wood.

The District Trustee Board has focused on governance by reviewing the risk registers, District policies and supporting mandatory learning.

Chris Searle
District Lead Volunteer













OUR COUNTY MUSEUM IS OPEN ON MONDAY 23 JUNE.
Pop in and view some history of Hertfordshire Scouts!











- County Chair -
Mike Shurety

The road ahead is not always clearly mapped



Our Annual Review traditionally sets out the numerous and varied activities undertaken by our leaders and young people throughout Hertfordshire. This year is no exception and I hope you will have been impressed by the scale of the events and expeditions in which our members, across all sections, have participated. I never fail to be impressed by the commitment and ingenuity demonstrated by our leaders when delivering the Scouting programme and I am in awe of the time they give up in order to do so. I am indebted to their dedication.

When writing my annual coda to the Review, however, I attempt to look forward, rather than in retrospect, and try to anticipate the changes and challenges that lie ahead. Having revisited my contribution to last year's Review, which focused on the benefits of the Transformation Initiative and governance changes, I realise that I concentrated almost exclusively on the benefits to be delivered without necessarily highlighting the challenges. The challenges were, of course, numerous and, in terms of predicting the future I am certainly not in the same league as Nostradamus.

Although at County level the transition from Executive Committee to Trustee Board, bringing us in line with Charity Commission guidance, went smoothly, difficulties were experienced elsewhere. Our Districts have now all adopted the new governance model but many Groups are still struggling, particularly when it comes to identifying volunteers to fill Trustee roles. Perhaps the biggest challenge, across the County, has been the introduction of the new membership database which is causing significant distraction and frustration to many leaders. It is fundamental to so many other functions although the benefits, when fully implemented and running properly, should be significant.

Whilst not a part of the Transformation Initiative, the Prevention of Future Deaths document has, rightly, impacted on our approach to compliance with risk assessment and safety procedures as well as mandatory training. This has had an impact across the County. Fortunately, the County's approach to risk management was reviewed in 2023/24 and we are now well placed to promote a safer Scouting environment. There is, of course, no room for complacency and we must continue to monitor the risks and respond appropriately.

There will always be challenges and when one problem is resolved another will arise. These are not always predictable but I am confident that many of the structural difficulties we faced during 2024 were teething problems and can be resolved as a result of Scouting ingenuity and endeavour. What is important is that they do not distract from the delivery of the Scouting programme to our young people.

There are always lessons to be learnt and for me, on this occasion at least, I will not be making predictions about what the future holds.

Yours in Scouting

Mike Shurety
County Chairman