



Trustees' Annual Report 2025 - 2026

#PlaceToBelong

Scouts 
Sunderland

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Message from the Chair

Dear Colleagues,

“The more things change the more they stay the same”

In recent months, having said farewell to our former Lead Volunteer Carlton Gronow, we thank him for the time he spent with us and for what he achieved. We now welcome our new Lead Volunteer Aaron Horton who, I'm glad to say, has been recruited from within our own ranks. I am confident that Aaron will take us forward based on his own particular skillset and provide us with the leadership, diligence and creativity that Sunderland District Scouts deserve.

In the face of a such a significant and relatively sudden change in leadership I am pleased to report that, from my point of view, the handover has been seamless and so, we move on – a bit like when the country gets a new Prime Minister, the furniture van taking the former occupant's possessions away from the back door of No. 10 Downing Street leaves almost at the same time as the new PM arrives at the front door.

Scouting undoubtedly continues to provide opportunities for our young people, to engage in adventure, physical exercise, new skills, personal development and friendships, not forgetting fun. However, we are also only too aware that these positives can only thrive in a scrupulously safe and healthy environment. To this end the District Trustees Board has taken steps to ensure that we and all our groups are compliant with the Regulatory Advice, as well as the latest safety notices from The Scout Association.

This is the single most important set of precautions that we can put into effect, and I implore all trustees, leaders and other volunteers to adhere to this advice and guidance in every way. As a follow on, can I request that everyone who needs to, keeps up-to-date with their safety and safeguarding training obligations.

The District Trustee Board has also updated its local policies across a wide range of topics, including in relation to Events, Finance, Hardship and Digital Media, has adopted the requirements of a Safe Scouting Premises Audit and has engaged in a recruitment campaign.

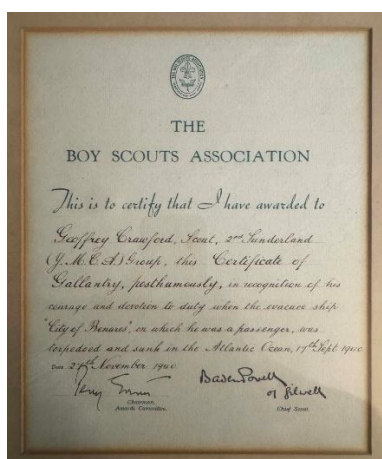
I personally never cease to be impressed by the way in which Scouting is set up and the tools it has at its disposal, from POR to online training. I am even more impressed by the way in which the apparent plethora of information percolates through the organisation from national to group levels. We need always, to be “fit for purpose”.

One of the events I attended in 2025/26 was the AGM of the Sunderland Voluntary Sector Alliance (SVSA) which exists “to support and strengthen the voluntary, community and social enterprise sector in Sunderland. We provide services to help organisations thrive, and we work actively to ensure the sector's voice is heard by policy makers and funders”.

The SVSA is available to help support a wide range of local charities (including Scouting) by offering advice, training, equipment and identifying potential funding sources. In a breakout, round table discussion I was struck by the advantage we have in Scouting - underpinned by our infrastructure, our policies, organisation and rules, our initiatives, our profile and our century's worth of experience. Some of the people I talked to had almost started with a blank sheet of paper and had to make it up as they were going along. How fortunate are we!?

It was a privilege for me to attend Sunderland Minster, shortly after our last AGM, for an event commemorating the tragic sinking of HMS City Of Benares, in World War 2. The ship was being used to transport 90 evacuee children from the United Kingdom to safety in Canada. The German submarine U-48 sank her by torpedoes in September 1940 with the loss of 260 people out of a complement of 408 including the death of 77 of the evacuated children. Eleven of the children were from Sunderland and sadly only two survived. Among the Sunderland children lost was Geoffrey Crawford, a Scout aged 14. Geoffery fell back into the sea while helping another child to safety and for this selfless act was posthumously awarded the Certificate of Gallantry of the Boy Scouts' Association. The Certificate, issued on November 27, 1940, by the founder and first Chief Scout, Lord Baden-Powell, reads: "This is to certify that I have awarded to Geoffrey Crawford, Scout, the 2nd Sunderland (Y.M.C.A.) Group, the Certificate of Gallantry, posthumously, in recognition of his courage and devotion to duty when the evacuee ship. City of Benares, on which he was passenger, was torpedoed and sunk in the Atlantic Ocean, 17th September. 1940."

The memorial service held at the Minster on 21 September 2025 was initiated by the Sunderland Volunteer Life Brigade to commemorate this desperately sad episode in Sunderland's history. The solemnity of the occasion was added to by the presence of family members of one of the two surviving children and one of the naval crew involved in the rescue. We were proudly represented by a contingent of Scouts ably led by Aaron, in honour of Geoffrey's memory.



Certificate of Gallantry for Geoffrey Crawford
Dated 27th November 1940, from Sunderland District Scout Archive



Sunderland Scouts' Contingent at Sunderland Minster
L → R: Alex Smith, Aaron Horton, John Cooper, Jake Mann, Cameron Hirst

On a much less sombre note, we managed to infiltrate the inner circle of Sunderland Football Club during what was their most successful season in decades; Manager Régis Le Bris was the honoured guest at a special achievement dinner held at the Stadium of Light on 19 September 2025.

Over 60 guests gathered to celebrate Régis Le Bris' achievement of taking the team into the Premier League in a single season of management and getting the club off to such a stellar start in the 2025/6 campaign.

As a gesture of welcome, I was invited to present Régis Le Bris with one of the new Sunderland District neckerchiefs, made all the more appropriate, given its red and white colours. The neckerchief was gratefully accepted and Régis Le Bris became, for one night at least, a Sunderland District Scout - but you know what we say, "...Once a Scout, always a Scout". He was very interested to hear about the good work that we have been doing in the Sunderland community since 1908!



*Proudly wearing Sunderland Colours!
Régis Le Bris (Left) and Keith Lowes (Right)*

Finally, as we look back on one Scouting year and look forward to the next I must take this opportunity to thank my fellow Trustees Board Members for all the hard work they have contributed to ensure the smooth running of the District and for the support they have given me – and all the while undertaking leaders' roles and other voluntary duties (where do you get the energy from and whatever it is can you give me some). I also send my respect and gratitude to all our volunteers in the District and thank you for what you do to keep our organisation flourishing as one of this City's leading and most enduring institutions.

My closing remarks in last year's Annual Report were

“Changes will come along in the next months/year as they always do and I'm confident that Sunderland District Scout Council will continue to rise to the challenge”.

This bears repeating, but maybe not so many shocks this time around, eh!

Your Sincerely,

Mr. Keith Lowes

**Chair of the Board of Trustees
Sunderland District Scouts**

A Reference and Administration Details

Charity Name:	Sunderland District Scout Council
Also known as:	Sunderland Scouts / Sunderland District Scouts
Charity Number:	520713
Scout HQ Registration Number:	100001701
Principal Address of the Charity:	Kayll House, 9 Foyle Street, Sunderland, SR1 1LB
Period this report covers:	1 st April 2025 to 31 st March 2026

Board of Trustees

Those volunteers appointed by the District Scout Council to be responsible for the sound day-to-day governance of the charity on their behalf.

Name	Role
Keith Lowes	District Chair
Steven Whatt	District Treasurer
Carlton Gronow	Lead Volunteer until 19 th February 2026
Greg Piskosz	Acting District Lead Volunteer from 19 th February 2026
Cameron Hirst	District Youth Lead
Aaron Horton	Trustee
James Elliott	Trustee
John Cooper	Trustee until 10 th September 2025
Lesley Robinson	Trustee
Phil Atkinson	Trustee
Dave Russell	Trustee
Jake Mann	Trustee from 10 th September 2025
Kris Woods	Co-Opted Trustee from 10 th November 2025
Ethan Cowey	Co-Opted Trustee from 10 th November 2025

B Structure, Governance and Management

Governing Document

The District's governing documents are those of The Scout Association. They consist of a Royal Charter, which in turn gives authority to the Bylaws of the Association and the Policy, Organisation and Rules (POR) of the Scout Association.

Constitution

The District follows the model constitution as set out in Chapter 5, Section C of the Policy, Organisation and Rules (POR) of the Scout Association.

Trustee Selection

The trustees are appointed in accordance with the Policy, Organisation and Rules of The Scout Association.

The District Scout Council

The District Scout Council is the electoral body which appoints the District Trustee Board to manage the day to day matters of the charity.

The ex officio members of the District Scout Council are members by virtue of their role in The Scouts:

- a. All adult members with a District role
(as per The Scouts Policy, Organisation & Rules Teams Table)
- b. All Group Lead Volunteer members of each Group Leadership Team from the District
- c. All Group Leadership Team Members of each Group in the District
- d. All Group Section Team Members of each Group in the District
- e. All Group Trustee Board Chairs from the District
- f. All Group Trustee Board Treasurers from the District
- g. All Explorers (including Young Leaders) in the District
- h. All members of the Scout Network in the District
- i. All parents of all Explorers (including Young Leaders) in the District
- j. The County Lead Volunteer (Durham Scouts)
- k. The County Chair (Durham Scouts)

For the year 2025-2026, the District did not have any appointed or community members of the District Scout Council.

The District Trustee Board

The District is managed by the District Trustee Board, the members of which are the Charity Trustees of the Scout District, which is a registered charity. As charity trustees, they are responsible for complying with legislation applicable to charities. This includes registration, keeping proper accounts, and making returns to the Charity Commission as appropriate.

The Trustee Board meets on average every 2 months, though sometimes more frequently as required. Members of the Trustee Board complete 'Being a Scouts Trustee' learning within the first 6 months of joining the Board as well as mandatory training for Safety, Safeguarding, Creating Inclusion, 'Who we are and what we do' and GDPR if not completed previously and within 3 years since last completing.

This Trustee Board exists to make sure the charity is well-managed, risks are assessed and mitigated, buildings and equipment are in good working order, and everyone follows legal requirements and the organisation's policies and rules. Their support helps other volunteers run high-quality and safe programmes that give young people skills for life.

Risk and Internal Control

The Trustee Board has identified the major risks to which they believe the District is exposed; these have been reviewed, and systems have been established to mitigate against them. The main areas of concern that have been identified are:

Damage to the building, property and equipment

The District would request the use of buildings, property and equipment from neighbouring organisations such as a church, community centre, Scout Groups or other Scout Districts. Similar reciprocal arrangements exist with these organisations. The District has sufficient buildings and contents insurance in place to mitigate against permanent loss.

Injury to leaders, helpers, supporters and members

The District, through the capitation fees, contributes to The Scout Association's national accident insurance policy. Additionally, the district pays for Personal Accident Insurance cover for non-member helpers. Risk Assessments are undertaken before all activities.

Reduced income from fundraising

The District is primarily reliant upon income from subscriptions and fundraising. The District does hold a reserve to ensure the continuity of activities should there be a major reduction in income. The Board could raise the value of subscriptions to increase the income to the District on an ongoing basis, either temporarily or permanently.

Reduction or loss of leaders

The District is totally reliant upon volunteers to run and administer the activities of the District. If there was a reduction in the number of leaders to an unacceptable level in a particular section or the District as a whole, then there would have to be a contraction, consolidation or closure of a Group, Unit, or the entire District. The District works to support volunteer recruitment to ensure adequate volunteer support with all activities.

Reduction or loss of members

The District provides activities for all young people aged 4 to 25. If there was a reduction in membership in a particular Group, Unit or the District as a whole, then there would have to be a contraction, consolidation or closure of Groups or Units. The District supports Groups and Units with growth to ensure appropriate section sizes are maintained or built up.

Material Mismanagement or Loss

The District has in place systems of internal controls that are designed to provide reasonable assurance against material mismanagement or loss. These include a system of limited delegated authority for expenditure and 2 signatories for all payments and comprehensive insurance policies to ensure that insurable risks are covered.

C Objectives and Activities

The Purpose of Scouting

Scouting exists to actively engage and support young people in their personal development, empowering them to make a positive contribution to society.

The Values of Scouting

As Scouts we are guided by these values:

- **Integrity** - We act with integrity; we are honest, trustworthy and loyal.
- **Respect** - We have self-respect and respect for others.
- **Care** - We support others and take care of the world in which we live.
- **Belief** - We explore our faiths, beliefs and attitudes.
- **Co-operation** - We make a positive difference; we cooperate with others and make friends.

The Scout Method

Scouting takes place when young people, in partnership with adults, work together based on the values of Scouting and:

- Enjoy what they are doing and have fun
- Take part in activities indoors and outdoors
- Learn by doing
- Share in spiritual reflection
- Take responsibility and make choices
- Undertake new and challenging activities
- Make and live by their Promise.

Achieving our Objectives

The district, through its own activities or support to its constituent groups and units, works to achieve its objectives through the following methods:

14 – 24 Provision

Whilst the Scout programme from 4 to 14 is delivered in the Scout Groups we support, the District is responsible for directly operating our 14 to 24 provisions: Explorer Scouts and Scout Network. The District ensures suitable leadership, resources and finances are in place to support young people to find a Place to Belong, build Skills for Life, and achieve their full potential.

Adventurous Activities

We encourage all sections to run adventurous activities for young people and adults and support the acquisition and renewal of adventurous activity permits, including Nights Away permits that allow our leaders to take young people on overnight camps and other residential activities.

Growth and Development

Liaising with the Regional Growth and Communities Team to identify local Growth and Development opportunities which can grow local Scouting. Whether this mean opening new Groups, new Sections or Re-energising a Group which may have less numbers.

Events

We run a number of District Events through the year and support Groups in participating in County Events. The purpose of these is to supplement the Scout programme where scale or access to certain activities may be limited, sometimes these are competitive, and sometimes just for fun – but always providing new and exciting opportunities for young people within scouting! We are growing and developing a dedicated events team to deliver high quality district-level events.

Facilities & Resources

As a district, we maintain our headquarters at Kayll House, which includes a meeting space as well as our District Resource Centre and District Archive. We have a variety of activity equipment available for groups and units to use as part of their programme, and a box trailer available for groups and units to transport their equipment.

Hardship Support

We provide access to financial support for young people and adult volunteers to access when they are facing hardship, ensuring that socioeconomic factors are not a barrier to accessing scouting.

Programme Support

Scout Programme is delivered by the teams of amazing volunteers who make up section teams, but sometimes there's a need for a little extra support; the District provides this, whether it's hands-on support running a particular activity, or just advice from one of our section development leads or their teams. We also provide technical tools to help with administrative tasks, such as Online Scout Manager and Scout RAM.

Volunteer Joining Journey

The District provides support for new volunteers joining scouting, or changing their role within scouting. We support with their required volunteer learning, go out into groups to support with welcome conversations, and help volunteers to complete their DBS checks to keep all our young people safe.

Links & Community Impact

Maintaining links between our District and our neighbours, be they other parts of Scouting, or external bodies, is essential. We encourage and support giving young people the opportunity to take part in high quality social action as part of the Scouting Movement, as well as representing The Scouts at local, national and international events ensuring that Young People are the good work we do are showcased and celebrated in the wider community.

Volunteer Learning

The District supports groups and units with essential compliance tasks, ensuring that all volunteers have completed the required learning for their roles. This includes the essential Safety and Safeguarding training, but also supplementary role-specific learning to help volunteers provide a fantastic programme of activities to their young people. We also support volunteers to complete and renew their First Response learning as required.

Youth Shaped Scouting

As a youth movement, it is vital the scouting listens to the input of its youth members. As a District, we have appointed a District Youth Lead who works with local groups and units to ensure that the scouting experience in Sunderland is shaped by the needs and wants of the young people. The District Youth Lead also works with Youth Leads from across the County and wider UK to help young people in Sunderland have their voices heard.

Recognition

The District supports in recognising the contributions of both young people and adult volunteers to scouting and their wider community. An annual Celebration of Achievement recognises the Top Awards attained by young people, and the District also coordinates the presentation of adult awards for long service, good service, meritorious conduct and gallantry, as well as Commendation Awards presented by the District Lead Volunteer and District Youth Lead.

Public benefit statement

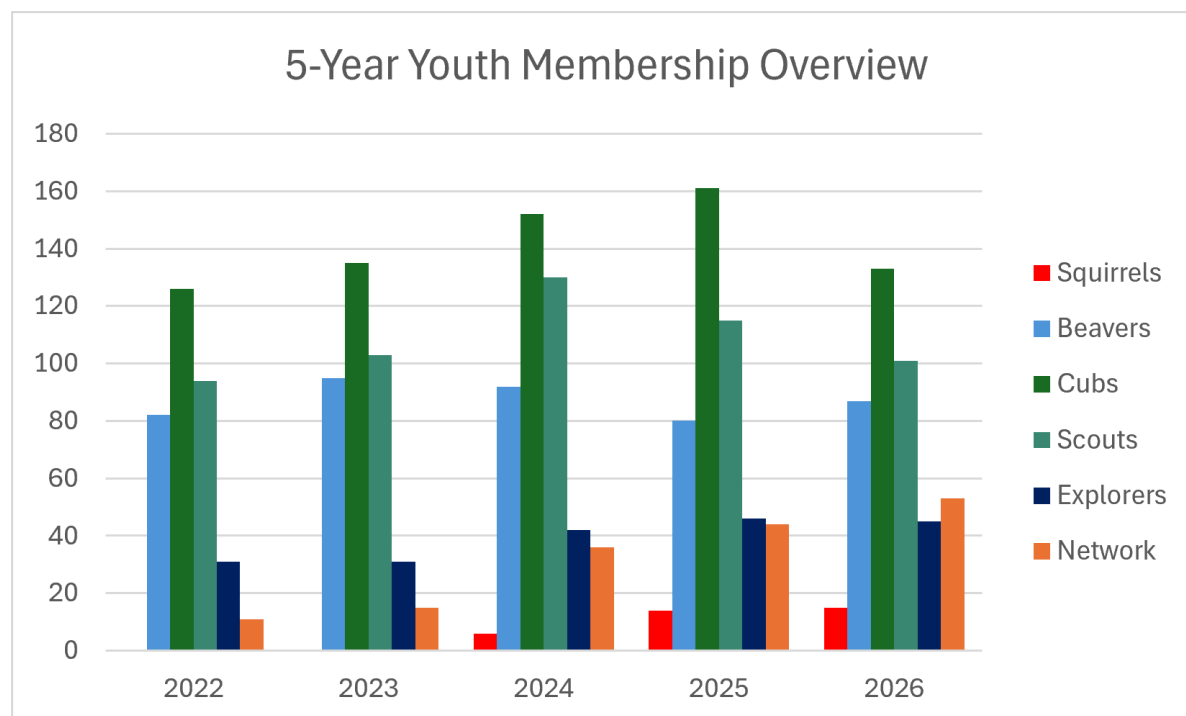
The District meets the Charity Commission's public benefit criteria under both the advancement of education and the advancement of citizenship or community development headings.

D Membership & Growth

The table shows a summary of the current membership of Sunderland Scouts, taken from our annual census in January 2026.

	2026					vs 2025	
	Male	Female	Self-Identify	Prefer not to Say	Total	Actual Change	Percentage Change
Youth							
Squirrels	14	1	0	0	15	+1	+7.14%
Beavers	67	20	0	0	87	+7	+8.75%
Cubs	113	20	0	0	133	-28	-17.39%
Scouts	85	16	0	0	101	-14	-12.17%
Explorers	29	16	0	0	45	-1	-2.17%
Scout Network	30	19	3	1	53	+9	+20.45%
Total	338	92	3	1	434	-26	-5.65%
Adult							
Volunteers	104	92	1	6	203	+48	+30.97%
Total							
Membership (Youth + Adult)	442	184	4	7	637	+22	+3.58%

The graphs show an overview of the numbers of youth members of Sunderland Scouts over the last five years (2021 – 2026), taken from the annual census each year.



E Financial Review

Sunderland District Scout Council Receipts and Payments Account

For the year from	01 April 2025	To	31 March 2026
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Statement of cash balances at the end of the year

	2025/26 Unrestricted funds £	2024/25 Unrestricted funds £
Cash funds		
Bank current account	6,690.00	6,298.47
Bank Deposit Account	50,142.96	57,536.32
Equals Money account	0.00	844.96
Cash Float	40.00	75.00
Total cash funds	56,872.96	65,754.75
Investment assets		
Shop stock	7,503.25	7,397.31
Land and buildings		
Kayll House	150,000.00	150,000.00
Dene Lane	12,000.00	12,000
Trailer	500.00	500.00
Scouting equipment, furniture, etc	1,500.00	1,500.00
Total non-cash assets	171,505.23	171,397.31
Liabilities		
Accounts not yet paid	0.00	129.26
Expenses incurred but not invoiced	0.00	0.00
Group Activity Debtors	0.00	0.00
Shop Debtors	0.00	86.40
Loan - detail	0.00	0.00
Other liabilities	0.00	0.00
Total liabilities	0.00	215.66
Total net assets	228,378.19	236,367.72

The above receipts and payments account and statement of assets and liabilities were approved by the Trustees on 30/06/2025 and signed on their behalf by:

_____ Signature	Steven Whatt _____ Name	_____ Treasurer
_____ Signature	Keith Lowes _____ Name	_____ Chair

Charity number: 520713

Sunderland District Scout Council Receipts and Payments Account

For the year from	01 April 2025	To	31 March 2026
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Receipts and Payments

	2025/26 Unrestricted funds £	2024/25 Unrestricted funds £
Payments		
Membership fees paid to County	22,098.00	23,504.00
Youth programme and activities	2,439.76	1,981.29
Explorers	5,307.83	6,459.92
Network	0.00	15.00
Adult support and training	35.00	1,803.78
Refunds/Rebates	208.00	633
Grants Made	400.00	0
Rates (Kayll House)	402.83	128.24
Water and sewerage (Kayll House)	543.26	509.28
Electricity and gas (Kayll House)	2,012.59	1,817.58
Maintenance and cleaning (Kayll House)	2,201.60	2700.00
Telephone, alarm and broadband (Kayll House)	0.00	0
Insurance (Kyall House)	942.88	923.68
Rent and rates (Dene Lane)	25.00	49.47
Water and sewerage (Dene Lane)	50.62	269.46
Maintenance (Dene Lane)	11,746.00	19,496.59
Insurance (Dene Lane)	0.00	254.00
Trailer Repair	0.00	165.46
AGM and trustee expenses	76.53	0
Shop purchases for resale	4,915.73	6,125.04
Legal etc. Fees	0.00	0
Bank charges	32.49	299.24
Audit Fees	217.13	0
Subscriptions	0.00	1,627.00
Miscellaneous	543.99	1054.23
Sub total	54,198.88	69,816.26
Total Gross Expenditure	54,198.88	69,816.26
Asset and Investment purchases, etc.		
Total payments	54,198.88	69,816.26
Surplus/(Deficit) generated in the year	(7,881.79)	(16,618.63)

Charity number: 520713

Sunderland District Scout Council

Receipts and Payments Account

For the year from	01 April 2025	To	31 March 2026
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Receipts and Payments

	2025/26 Unrestricted funds £	2024/25 Unrestricted funds £
Receipts		
Donations, legacies and similar income		
Membership Subscriptions	25,915.00	28,080.00
Donations	3000.00	0
County rebate	208.00	633.00
Rent from Kayll House car park	1,000.00	1,000.00
Trailer Income	65.00	40.00
Sub total	30,188.00	29,753.00
Grants		
Grants	0.00	4,850.00
Sub total	0.00	4,850.00
Fundraising (gross)		
Camps, training courses, events	3092.00	2,152.66
Shop	5844.27	8,543.99
Network	52.00	0
Explorers	6,416.10	7004.92
Other	355.06	106
Sub total	15,759.43	17,807.57
Investment Income		
Bank Interest	369.66	787.06
Sub total	369.66	787.06

Total Gross Income	46,317.09	53,197.63
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Asset and Investment sales, etc.	0.00	0.00
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Total Receipts	46,317.09	53,197.63
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Charity number: 520713

Sunderland District Scout Association

Independent Examiner's Report

Independent examiner's report to the trustees of Sunderland District Scout Group

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of the Sunderland District Scout Group for the year ended 31 March 2026.

Respective responsibilities of trustees and examiner

As the charity trustees of the Sunderland District Scout Group you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011 ('the Act').

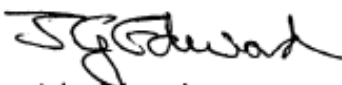
I report in respect of my examination of the Sunderland District Scout Group accounts carried out under section 145 of the 2011 Act and in carrying out my examination I have followed all the applicable Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the Act.

Independent examiner's statement

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no material matters have come to my attention in connection with the examination giving me cause to believe that in any material respect:

1. accounting records were not kept in respect of the Sunderland District Scout Group as required by section 130 of the Act; or
2. the accounts do not accord with those records.

I have no concerns and have come across no other matters in connection with the examination to which attention should be drawn in this report in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.



John Edwards
2 Rose Cottages
Windlass Lane
Washington
Tyne and Wear
July 12th 2026

Reserves Policy

The District's policy on reserves is to hold sufficient resources to continue the charitable activities of the District should income and fundraising activities fall short. The District Trustee Board considers that the District should hold a sum equivalent to 6 months of running costs, circa £4000

Investment Policy

The District Income and Expenditure is very small and as a consequence does not have sufficient funds to invest in longer-term investments such as stocks and shares. The District has therefore adopted a low-risk strategy to the investment of its funds. All funds are held in cash using only mainstream banks or building societies or The Scout Association's Short-Term Investment Service.

The District Trustee Board regularly monitors the levels of bank balances and the interest rates received to ensure the group obtains maximum value and income from its banking arrangements. Occasionally this may involve using an account that requires a period of notice before funds may be withdrawn, before doing so the District Trustee Board considers the cash flow requirements.

F Declaration

The trustees declare that they have approved the report above.

Signed on behalf of the charity's trustees:

Signature:



Full Name:

Keith Lowes

Position:

Chair of the Board of Trustees – Sunderland District Scouts

Date:

11/08/2026