

**MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
OF THE SUFFOLK COUNTY SCOUT COUNCIL
Hallowtree Activity Centre, Alnesbourne Priory, Nacton, Ipswich, IP10 0JP
Thursday 22nd September 2022 at 7.45pm**

PRESENT:

County Commissioner, County Treasurer, County Secretary and Members of the County Scout Council (as per Constitution). Attending via an on-line link - Graham Woolley (Regional Commissioner for the East of England) and Peter Jones (County Chair).

A **Prayer** was delivered by the County Commissioner, Howard Blackett

A **minute's silence** was held in memory of our late Patron, Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II who had died on 8th September.

The **Investiture of the County Commissioner**, Howard Blackett, then took place led by Keith Barber, the Deputy County Commissioner.

1. **Welcome:** the meeting opened with Rodney Turner, Deputy County Chair, welcoming everyone to the physical meeting this year and giving Peter Jones' apologies for his absence.

Jon Emin, the County Treasurer was introduced and thanked for his vital and significant contribution to our understanding of the effect of COVID pandemic on the finances of both the County and Groups.

The meeting was confirmed as quorate with thirty-six Council members in attendance and with twenty-one guests.

2. **Apologies** for absence had been received from – Lady Clare, Countess of Euston (County President), Peter Jones (County Chair), John Ineson, Jo Cracknell, Hilary Prior, Alison Barber, Sarah Britten, Martin Brooks, Karen Butcher, Alan Chilstone, Celia Comber, Barbara Cutting, Alfie Foster-Green, Leigh Foster-Green, Keith Gadsden, Mike Golston, Alan Gosling, Brian Harley, Paula Hollings, Malcolm Howard, Anne Humphrys, Daniel Jennings, Julie Lovett, Steve Lovett, James Nunn, Graham Smith, John Wiseman, Sam Rowland.
3. **To approve the Amendments to the Suffolk Constitution** which had previously been sent out to County Scout Council Members.
 - a. Rodney Turner noted that no questions had been received about the changes. One message of congratulation on 'getting it right' had been received. Members were requested for all amendments to be approved in **one block vote** which was **APPROVED**.
 - b. Members voted on the changes all of which were **APPROVED**.
4. **The minutes of the previous County Annual General Meeting** held on-line on 30th September 2021 due to COVID-19 restrictions were **APPROVED**.
5. Receive and consider the **Annual Report & Accounts 2021/22:**

Keith Barber presented the Annual Report for the period within the review period when he was in post as the Acting County Commissioner. No questions were asked about the report

John Emin, County Treasurer provided the following commentary regarding the accounts:

Our financial performance for the year to 31 March 2022 was as expected and as outlined in my commentary last year which resulted in a deficit for the year. This was due to our non-activity-based income reducing by 64% from £45k in 2021 to £16k in the 12 months to 31st March 2022. The two reasons for this were the fall in membership over Covid and also our 50% reduction in memberships charged to the districts.

Whilst income was severely reduced, our costs are not able to be reduced by similar percentages as a reasonable proportion of our annual costs are fixed. Three examples of this are noted below:

Salary, office rent and associated other office costs £10,000 p.a' Insurances - £5,000p.a., Loan repayment to HQ - £5,000 (Bradfield loan) p.a.

The net result of these activities was a deficit of the year of £19k which has been absorbed by County reserves whilst not compromising our reserves policy.

Our balance sheet shows reduced total net assets of £342k. Of this sum £155k relates to the value of fixed assets, the most prominent one being Bradfield Park.

You will note cash balances showing as £358k however these are certainly not all free funds for County to use. If the Restricted and Designated elements are removed from this balance, then the free cash reduces to £308k. Of this sum £167k was primarily sums received in advance from Districts for the next years membership fee which will need to be paid over to HQ and also creditors of approx. £18k. If these sums are subtracted from the balance, then true free cash reduces to approx. £126k.

Looking forward to 2023 we need to look to rebuild our World Scout Jamboree fund as much as possible, so we are able to support leaders and financially disadvantaged participants as we have done in previous events. We are also faced with having to find a new home for our HQ operation during the next 12 months or so which will need to be considered and planned carefully.

My thanks go to all the incredibly supportive people that have helped me in the role in the last financial year, I am extremely grateful to you all for sparing so much time and your endless patience in helping me as a non-scouter navigate this amazing organisation. I joined in March 2020, which as it turned out was the start of a very interesting journey. Also, thanks and gratitude to Ian Brookman for preparing and examining the annual numbers.

No questions were asked about the report.

6. The County Commissioner's nomination for County Chairman, Peter Jones, was **APPROVED**.
7. Election of the County Secretary and County Treasurer,
 - a. The honorary County Secretary – Carl Gloess - **unanimously elected**.
 - b. The honorary County Treasurer – Jon Emin - **unanimously elected**.
8. The following people were noted as presently Elected to sit on the County Executive Committee (1 years left).
Colin Winter Matthew Gilbert Keith Barber Dan Jackson [One elected seat remains vacant]
Keri John stood down during the year was thanked for her contribution.
9. The County Commissioner's nominated members of the County Executive were **approved unanimously**.
Rodney Turner Emma Freeman (was Scholey) Selina Noton
10. County Representative nominated to serve as a **Member of the Council of the Scout Association** (1 year left) – **Keith Barber**
11. County Representative nominated to serve as a **Youth Member of the Council of the Scout Association** (2 years left) - **Dan Jackson** was **approved unanimously**

The Chair also thanked **Caitlin Rawlinson** who had stepped down as the County Youth Commissioner during the year.

12. It was confirmed that Keith Barber, as Suffolk's National Council Representative and Dan Jackson, as National Council Youth Member Representative and the Regional Development Manager (Kathryn Andrews) are 'invited to attend' County Executive meetings.

The Chair noted that **Co-opted Members** of the County Executive Committee are selected (if required) at its first meeting after the AGM.

13. John Emin proposed the appointment of **Ian Brookman as Independent Examiner** – seconded by Rodney Turner which was **approved unanimously**.
14. **The County Commissioner, Howard Blackett** provided the following commentary.

I took up my role as County Commissioner at the beginning of April 2022: the County Commissioner's report for this year's AGM has been supplied by Keith Barber, who was acting CC for a number of months before I came into post.

I would like to thank you all for the warm welcome I have received as the new CC and to record how impressed I have been by the people I have met and the activities I have seen in action (notably the recent Suffolk Punch). I would like to make special mention of Graham Woolley, East of England Regional Commissioner; Peter Jones, County Chair; Carl Gloess, County Administrator; Keith Barber, Deputy CC; Peter Jarvis; Rod Turner; members of the

County Senior Leadership Team; and our DCs and ACCs, all of whom have readily given me advice and support as I have settled into the role of County Commissioner.

I have recently drawn up a Strategic Plan for the county which is included in these reports (available to download at <https://www.suffolkscouts.org.uk/about/strategic-plan>). The plan is deliberately brief and highlights, I hope, where my priorities lie – in delivering the best possible programme for our Scouts and in focusing attention on our greatest assets, our adult volunteers who deliver Scouting.

15. **Graham Woolley, the Regional Commissioner for the East of England** attended the meeting remotely but technical difficulties with microphone meant that his words were read by the County Secretary as follows: -
Fellow Scouters and supporters of Suffolk Scouts,

Despite the immense sadness we are feeling, following the passing of HM Queen Elizabeth II, we know she would have wanted us to carry on with as much “business as usual” as is possible. I’m therefore delighted that the County AGM is happening as scheduled this evening. I’m sure that Groups, Districts and Counties around the UK and Commonwealth will be finding appropriate ways to remember and honour the life of Her Majesty in the coming weeks.

God Save The King!

Thank you for offering me an opportunity to share some thoughts at your AGM, as we once again look back at the last year and, even more importantly, look to the future.

This time last year, many of us were pretty confident that young people numbers would recover strongly but were rather more nervous about how many adults may have slipped from the Movement during the Pandemic.

The reality of the Suffolk Census 2022 was a 22% recovery in our youth membership – a fantastic result, whilst there was a slower 2% recovery in our adult numbers. So, there is still a way to go, but I firmly believe that Census 2023 will report our youth numbers being back in positive territory and, further progress having been made with adults. It’s great to hear that Adult Recruitment is back on everyone’s agenda.

Why am I so confident in our recovery? Because of the quality of our adult volunteers across the county and, our belief in what we do!

2021 saw us taking tentative steps in returning to our active programmes, and a cautious return to camping and adventurous activities. This year, our confidence has strengthened further and there have been some amazing events already – something about which Suffolk is justifiably proud; I have heard some great stories about the Queen’s Platinum Jubilee celebrations, and particularly your Suffolk Punch event, which was a huge success. Well done to all who helped make that happen!

Would you believe that our new Squirrels section is one year old already? I recall speaking to some Squirrel leaders earlier this year and, they explained just how well the “Cohort” arrangements have been working and, particularly the quality of support they had received. I know Squirrels will go from strength to strength and, I’d like to thank all our adults who have contributed to this success.

Another part of our increasing confidence starts from our senior leadership team and, I would like to sincerely thank Howard for accepting the role of your County Commissioner earlier this year. Whilst everything has been new to him, I’m delighted with the way his induction process was delivered and received. Huge thanks to Gary Burden and his team in Deben for your support.

I would also add similar thanks to Keith Barber, who kindly stepped in as Acting County Commissioner, and has provided ongoing support to Howard in recent months.

Whilst I have your attention for a moment, I must mention Mandatory Ongoing Learning... I’d like to thank everyone who has played their part in getting/keeping Suffolk at very low general levels of non-compliance. There are a couple of areas I’d like to mention:

GDPR: A stunningly interesting topic I know, but I’d appreciate everyone’s support in catching up and keeping up with where we need to be, particularly (but not only) around our Executive Committees.

And, a request for a change of mindset around mandatory learning... There are many things in life that we have to

keep up with... Car MoTs, Insurance and tax, club membership fees and all sorts. Essentially, there's a deadline we must meet...

Mandatory Ongoing Learning is exactly the same! Your Compass records will include a expiry date for things like Safety, Safeguarding etc. My Plea: Could you all please keep your eyes on your own records, to see what is needed by when and, here it comes...: Make arrangements to complete mandatory learning before it becomes due, rather than after... Sorry to sound so radical! Have a think... You know it makes sense ;-) Thanks!

In closing, it would be remiss of me if I didn't mention our Transformation plans for 2023.

You probably haven't heard too much about the detail yet and, that is a deliberate strategy as there is so much to consider and to plan for. To avoid speculation and rumour and let Scouters continue to develop our young people, whilst a dedicated team of volunteers focus their attention on this year's changes, I believe, is entirely the right way to do this. To embark on the most major internal change in recent years, as we continue to emerge from The Pandemic, shows how much confidence Carl and the UK Leadership Team has in our volunteers across the country. Thank you all, in advance for your support in the changes to come.

That's almost it from me... Other than to thank every single person in Suffolk Scouts, for your personal time and commitment. You are an enormous force for good and every young person is benefitting hugely from what you do. Please, keep doing it in these difficult times!

Graham managed to get in contact with the meeting and added the following: Apologies for the last-minute technical difficulties but the future is looking bright for Suffolk Scouting and my thanks to all the leaders who have done a wonderful job throughout the pandemic.

16. Closing Remarks

The Chair thanked the members for attending and noted the close of business.

Graham Woolley added the following (via text message) *I would like us to pay tribute to our young adults who supported the Lying-in-State formalities. Weren't you/they amazing? A credit to our Movement, their Districts and Groups, together with parents, families and friends. Thank you all!*

The meeting closed at 8.35 pm

Awards: The County Commissioner presented the following awards (with citations)

Good Service Awards

Silver Wolf

Keith Barber Peter Jarvis

Silver Acorn

Carl Gloess David Jameson

Bar to Award of Merit

Martin Agar Rodney Turner

Commissioner's Commendation

Hayley Liddell Brian Harvey

Suffolk Punch Core Team (Will Dowe, Jo Cracknell, Max Raffe, Josh Dixon, Jake Dixon, Karen Butcher, Tim Cutbush, Dan Jackson, Adam Thorpe and Leigh Foster-Green)

Long Service Awards

15 Years Rodney Turner

Presentations then followed from **Suffolk Punch** (video) and the **Suffolk Unit to 25th World Scout Jamboree**