

SOUTH EAST SCOTLAND REGIONAL SCOUT COUNCIL

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of South East Scotland Regional Scout Council held on 10th October 2018 at Queen Margaret University, Musselburgh

Present:

Stuart Imrie Deputy Chief Commissioner for Scotland; Fiona Elliot and Elizabeth Martin, Edinburgh Girlguiding; Mr and Mrs Ian Waddell representing Berwickshire Lieutenancy; Graeme Robertson, Regional Vice Chair; Malcolm Cutt, Regional Treasurer, John Bruce Regional Secretary; Margery Naylor, Regional Commissioner; Martin Elliott and Diane Marshall, Deputy Regional Commissioners; Kenneth Thomson, Vice President; Kate Docherty, Chief Executive of Scouts Scotland and over 40 members and supporters of the South East Scotland Regional Scout Council.

Welcome:

The meeting was opened by Malcolm Cutt in his role as Director of Operations and Finance at Queen Margaret University who welcomed everyone to the Annual General Meeting of the South East Scotland Regional Scout Council and the Annual Review of Scouting in the South East Region of Scotland.

Graeme Robertson also welcomed everyone to the meeting and explained that he would be chairing the meeting as John Cannon had met with an unfortunate cycling accident. He wished John a speedy recovery on behalf of those present.

Apologies:

John Cannon, Regional Chair; Sir Robert Clerk, Lord Lieutenant of Midlothian; Earl and Countess Rosebery; Richard Scott, Duke of Buccleuch; Mrs Jeanna Swan, Lord Lieutenant for Berwickshire; Professor Sir Hew Strachan, Lord Lieutenant for Tweeddale; Frank Ross, The Rt Hon Lord Provost of the City of Edinburgh; Andrew Sharkey, Chief Commissioner, Scouts Scotland; Dick Allan, Regional President, Douglas Allan, Regional Vice President; Norrie Allan; Isabel McNab; Jane Ramage; Muriel Beyer; Sylvia Castle-Smith; Barry Hughes; Bruce MacDonald; Lynne Wilson; Robert Anderson; Kirsty Ireland; Diane Ross; Lawrence Mitchell; Hilary Cartwright; Andrew Green; Emma Lyon and Susan Brown, Girl Guiding Edinburgh; Tamsin Growden and Mark Hesketh.

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting on 10th October 2017:

The minutes of the Annual General Meeting of the South East Scotland Regional Scout Council held on 10th October 2017 at Edinburgh headquarters of Girlguiding, 33 Melville Street, Edinburgh were agreed as a correct record. The minutes had been previously circulated to members of the Scout Council. They were approved on the proposal of Ken Thomson, Regional Vice President and seconded by Margaret Winter, Girlguiding Edinburgh.

Report by John Cannon, Regional Chair

Graeme read out a statement from John Cannon who was unable to attend due an injury he received whilst cycling.

John apologised for his absence and stated that in his first term as Chair, he had witnessed a very successful year for Scouting in the South East Scotland Region. With over 7000 young people and 2000 adults he was heartened to say that we are in good health and he thanked everyone involved, whether directly or indirectly, with making the game of scouting so relevant for our young people in South East Region.

He noted that it had also been a year of change. The Region was now led by Margery Naylor in the role of Regional Commissioner and there had also been a number of changes to the membership of the Regional Executive Committee. Most notably were the appointment of a new Secretary, John Bruce, a new Treasurer, Malcolm Cutt, and Graeme Robertson who had agreed to be vice chair, Graeme commented at this point that *"he didn't think it would involve chairing the AGM when he agreed to that!"*

John expressed his thanks to all the members of Regional Executive and the various sub committees, for their commitment and enthusiasm in attending regular meetings to ensure we had set and monitored the business strategy for the Region, as well as providing appropriate governance for all that we do as a Region. He was also delighted that Euan McFadzean, our Regional Youth Commissioner, would be co-opted on to the Executive this year, making sure our youth involvement extends to that committee.

He also took this opportunity to acknowledge and thank Colin Hyslop for his sterling work in the role of Treasurer, before stepping down at the end of last year; and also Brian Muir and Jill Barrow, who had decided to step down from the Regional Executive at this time. They had all made significant contributions to our governance, bringing expertise and dedication to their roles. He added that he was delighted that Jill would be continuing to provide support through her membership of the Finance committee, and Brian had committed to ensuring a smooth handover to his successor as Chair of the Risk Committee. Finally, he thanked John Watt, who was stepping down from the Finance committee, for his significant contribution over a number of years.

John continued by explaining that a new sub-committee, 'Infrastructure', had been put in place for the coming year, and would be tasked with developing proposals for the longer-term investment in our outdoor centres and activity provision across the Region. The group were due to present their initial proposal of ideas at the next Executive at the end of October.

He reminded everyone that he had stated that this had been a year of change, and advised everyone that Gillian Fraser, our Regional Operations Manager, had resigned in April. This had presented the Executive with an opportunity to review the staffing structures, and seek views from our leaders and supporters, on what support they would like to see from the Region in the future.

We could then consider how to achieve that through our future staff and volunteer structures. John took the opportunity to thank Gillian for all that she achieved while in the role of Regional Operations Manager.

He stated that the Executive had decided to take the proper time to carry out this review, and he was delighted that John Bruce agreed to step into an interim Centre Manager role. This allowed the space and time to conduct the review with the input from our staff, leaders and other volunteers. He thanked John, the Regional Support team, the Active Support team, the duty wardens and all the activity instructors who had not only kept things happening at Bonaly, but had also made some immediate improvements to the overall customer experience there. He added a special word of thanks to Yvonne Yule, who had volunteered to spend her days off during the summer in the Regional office and lend her support!

In terms of progress with our structural review, he was pleased to report that after consulting with a number of people including leaders, staff members and other volunteers, a paper would be going to the Regional Executive at the end of October to seek approval on a structure that we believe would be sustainable, affordable and meet the needs of the Region.

John explained that as a Regional Executive, they looked forward to supporting the Regional Strategy for 2018-23 and that the work done over the past year had set them up well to do this. He added that much of his own time in the past year had necessarily been focused on Bonaly, the staff structure, and coping with the changes in the Regional Executive. It had also been a busy time working with the Longcraig team on a number of operational matters and he was pleased to report that lots of progress had been made, enabling an ongoing positive dialogue with the Dalmeny estate about securing a longer-term lease that meets the needs of all stakeholders. He thanked the Longcraig ASU for the taster event they hosted for the Executive and leadership team in June. It had been well organised and clearly enjoyed by all present.

John added that he was looking forward to next year, when he could build on our achievements and find more time to engage widely, with the District Executive teams in particular. He stated that he would be working with Margery in the year ahead to engender and develop a sense of being part of "One South East Scotland Region" This involved a review of our engagement and communication approaches, to ensure we are connecting everyone across the Region to deliver the game of scouting in an inclusive and supportive way. Work had begun on our website and use of social media, so again watch this space for further developments. The feedback received from the Engagements sessions had also been very helpful, and he would share the high level themes that had emerged, and indicate how we might all work together, to keep doing what we do well, and bring about some improvements where needed.

In closing, John repeated his thanks, to all the Trustees and other individuals who had given generously of their time, to support himself and the work of the Regional Executive during the year. He added his personal thanks to Margery Naylor, John Bruce, Malcolm Cutt and Graeme Robertson, for all their support over the past year, and also to our Regional President, Dick Allan,

and to our Regional Vice Presidents Ken Thomson and Douglas Allan, for their ongoing help and advice.

Annual Report and Accounts for South East Scotland Regional Scout Council for the year ended 31 March 2018:

The Chair then asked Malcolm Cutt, Regional Treasurer, to comment on the accounts which had previously been made available to members of the Scout Council.

Malcolm stated that this year's accounts have been subjected to an audit and have been published on our web site. A paper copy can be provided on request. He added that he had only been in post for the last two days of the financial year however he went on to summarise the Region's current financial position which he described as showing a healthy surplus of £250k. This included legacies of £204k and a gain on disposal of Valleyfield Street HQ amounting to £37k. The underlying surplus in the general fund is therefore £9k overall.

He explained that the year-end cash balance of £921k includes the proceeds of the sale of Valleyfield Street which totaled £431K and a substantial legacy of £200k which was received during the year. The Regional Executive are considering proposals to reinvest some of this money in upgrading the facilities at Bonaly. In terms of charity governance, the Trustees are satisfied that the Region remains as a going concern. A full audit had been carried out by Scott Moncrieff who had issued an unqualified i.e. clean, audit report.

Malcolm added that work was underway to obtain a better understanding of income streams and where we spend our money. Recognition also needs to be given to the balance of support given to the Centres and support for the "Game of Scouting". In closing he thanked the Finance Committee, John Watt, Jill Barrow and James Sievewright for their support, Gillian Fraser and Blanche Vevers for her patience in trying to explain how everything worked.

The opportunity to ask questions was given however none were forthcoming. The Chair proposed the adoption of these accounts, the motion was seconded by the Treasurer and the meeting gave its approval.

Appointment of Office Bearers:

The Regional Commissioner thanked John Cannon and Graeme Robertson for their support over the past year and nominated John Cannon, as Regional Chair and Graeme Robertson as Vice Chair. She also sought approval for the election of Malcolm Cutt as Regional Treasurer and John Bruce as Regional Secretary to continue in post for a further 12 months.

These nominations having been proposed by Margery Naylor, Regional Commissioner were seconded by Graeme Robertson Regional Vice-Chair and accepted by those present at the meeting.

Election of Members to the Regional Executive:

The proposed elected members to the Regional Executive were Alistair McNeill, District Chair, Midlothian; Steve Gamble, District Chair, Braid; Andrew Green, District Chair, East Lothian and Douglas Allan, District Commissioner, Borders. As there were no other nominations they were appointed unopposed.

Nomination of members to the Regional Executive:

The following people were nominated by Margery Naylor, Regional Commissioner as members to the Regional Executive: John Lunn, Honorary Legal Adviser, Margaret Winter, representative from Girlguiding, Edinburgh, and Mark Hesketh, District Commissioner, Craigmmond. These appointments were approved by those present.

Scottish Council of the Scout Association

It was noted that due to a change in the constitution of the Scottish Scout Council, the Region is no longer required to nominate any representatives to their Council meetings as all members were now entitled to vote.

Appointment of member to the Council of the Scout Association

Graeme Robertson nominated Diane Marshall, Deputy Regional Commissioner, to be the elected member to the Council of the Scout Association. This was approved by those present.

Appointment of Regional Independent Auditor:

Malcolm Cutt, the Regional Treasurer proposed the appointment of Scott Moncrieff as Regional Independent Auditor. The proposal was seconded by Bill Ramsay and agreed by all present at the meeting.

Report by Margery Naylor, Regional Commissioner

Margery began by stating that "South East Region continues to be a success story by every measure". It had never been stronger or been making more of an impact and this was because of our volunteers. She therefore started by thanking everyone for their positive contribution to support the work of the Region, the Districts and within the Groups. In particular she thanked all our leaders for how well they provided fun and adventurous activities for our young people. She reminded everyone that was what Scouting was all about and that's what we were doing in South East Region!

She referred to the Annual Report which reflected the activities within the Region and our achievements over the past year. The report sets out many of the details of what has been happening, including the regular meetings, visits, camping which included 12 International camps during the past year and the full quota of young people going to the World Scout Jamboree. This also included the Gang Show, working at the Tattoo, and Youth Involvement team who had gained the Regional Youth Involvement Award. She added her thanks to, Judith Wood, for getting it printed so beautifully and cheaply!

She then went on to focus on the highlights of what we had achieved so far.

She reported that we now have a full Regional Leadership Team with District Commissioners in every District: Douglas Allan in Borders, John Hannah in East Lothian, Mark Hesketh in Craigalmond, Rob Whitelaw in Edinburgh North East, Keith Bryce in Pentland, Judith Wood in Braid, and Martin Browne in Midlothian. This was a major achievement and will ensure that Scouting goes from strength to strength and would be fun and safe for young people in the coming year. She emphasized that the District Commissioners were the engine room of Scouting in South East Region, who work tirelessly and referred to the emails that arrive at all times during the day, the evening and even at night. She stated that she didn't mind this and admired their commitment. She noted that all 7 Districts were providing exciting opportunities for our young people and outdoor activities featured heavily with camping and residential experiences still a firm favourite.

Margery pointed out that we almost had a full team of Deputy Regional Commissioners, Assistant Regional Commissioners and Regional Advisers of whom some may not be well known. Their names were therefore listed at the back of the Annual Report. Some however would be very well known especially Diane Marshall and Martin Elliot, our Deputy Regional Commissioners. Margery appreciated all that our team members have done, both in high profile roles and behind the scenes. She thought it was wrong to single out any of them, however she acknowledged Mary Dick, our ARC Adult Training and Russell Shoulder, our Safeguarding Awareness Coordinator who together had ensured that our leaders were well trained and running Scouting activities in a safe and responsible way. She reminded everyone present that we provide all mandatory training free of charge in South East Region.

She noted the need for more Assistant Regional Commissioners to support the work in sections and made an appeal for those nearing retirement and looking for something to fill their time or simply needed more to do. This was an opportunity to make a real impact in Scouting in the Region. She welcomed Lawrence Mitchell and Bruce MacDonald in their specialist roles of promoting adventurous activities such as mountaineering, hill walking, kayaking, sailing, and rafting and organising the permits needed by leaders. She commented that between them they had doubled the number of Regional Assessors for adventurous activities permits.

Margery used the link about water activities to highlight the Longcraig Scout Centre which is flourishing, after a difficult time in 2017. She thanked the 40 or so volunteers for their hard work and enormous time commitment as members of the Active Support Unit. Led by Malcolm Leckie

they have provided sessions for over 1,000 young people in 2018, along with supporting the annual Scottish Scout regatta at Lochgoilhead.

She acknowledged the work of the Regional Executive Committee which had analysed and improved the services offered at Bonaly Scout Centre. The Committee was developing a staffing structure that could offer real support to our leaders and was delighted to announce that the Regional Executive Committee had agreed to fund a Scouting Support Officer to support the work that is done by leaders and all our adult volunteers, day by day, week by week, year in and year out, such as running meetings, managing camps, and organising fundraising events. This person, who would be recruited as soon as possible, must have an in-depth knowledge of Scouting and be able to promote the recruitment and retention of new leaders.

Margery asked “why is recruitment important” and answered by stating that we were victims of our own success as a Region! The Region has over 2,000 adults and over 7,000 young people involved in Scouting. This was nearly 1,000 more young people and a 75% increase in adults since 2013. Every section had increased their numbers, particularly Explorers whose numbers have grown in 2018 by nearly 30% to about 700. The Region now has over 1,000 young people on waiting lists who want to join in the fun and excitement in our sections. She explained that the task over the next year in 2019 would be to work together with our current leaders to assist in the recruitment and training of new leaders and volunteers. The first year as a new Regional Leadership Team had set in place the building blocks for sustained growth and development. She stated that “Now we want to make it happen”.

She referred to the future and stated that it was very exciting that every District had produced a development plan for what their leaders want to happen in the year ahead. These 7 plans, and the recent Engagement sessions recently held across the Region, had been incorporated into a draft Regional Strategy for 2018-23 for our work with young people. This was available in paper format to take away or download from our website. This document follows the National and Scottish long term strategies in focusing on the three pillars, People, Programme and Perception however overall, the South East Region’s strategy focuses on the recruitment of new leaders which is seen as the main challenge. She added that she would welcome any comments regarding the Strategy.

Finally, Margery stated that she was looking forward to next year when she could encourage Scouting in South East Region and highlighted her plan to set up a Regional Awards Advisory Group with a target to double the number of awards to members who have given so much to young people.

Margery affirmed that Scouting was successful in South East Region because of the dedication of our leaders and supporters, who are all volunteers. She stated that their time, talents, skills and sense of humour were a real asset to this Region and she thanked them on behalf of all the young people in Scouting in South East Region. She added that it had been a privilege to have been the Regional Commissioner over the last 12 months. It had been challenging but definitely rewarding. She concluded by thanking Diane Marshall, Brian Morrison, Graeme Robertson and Martin Browne for organising the Annual Review.

Address by Stuart Imrie, the Deputy Chief Commissioner for Scotland

Stuart remarked that it had been a great pleasure to be invited to represent our new Chief Commissioner, Andrew Sharkey and speak to everyone. He explained that whilst he was based in Glasgow, he had started his Scouting in Edinburgh, at what is now the 114th Braid Scout Group. He felt like the prodigal son, returning home after 35 years of missionary work in the West and asked to be forgiven!

He acknowledged the recent challenges that had faced the Region and highlighted the fantastic work that had been achieved. As a Region the last few years had not been without their difficulties with the prolonged change over in the Regional Commissioner team however he believed that Margery was now building a strong and effective team to take things forward.

He stated that it was clear there was a great deal of brilliant Scouting going on in South East Region and that the review later that evening would be an opportunity to celebrate some of that success and recognise the commitment of your young people, which had been achieved with the support of their leaders and families.

Stuart reminded everyone that change was always unsettling, and it seemed to be a common occurrence in society and added that if we don't change and adapt with it, we risk becoming irrelevant to the young people of today. He used, as an example, the restructuring of the 33 Areas into the current 8 Regions in 2006. This had been completed at a time when Scouting in Scotland and in the UK had been declining however the Centenary Celebrations in 2007, changes in public perception and awareness of what Scouting has to offer, a very well recognised Chief Scout in Bear Grylls who made it cool to be a Scout, an exciting and revitalised programme and many other "changes" brought in along the way, had allowed Scouting to turn the corner on that decline. For the last 12 years the UK, Scotland and indeed South East Region have seen year-on-year growth in the participation of adults and young people. Since 2006 South East Region had grown by 51% with 9344 young people and adults recorded on last year's census. He added that there was still the potential to offer Scouting to many more young people and adults.

Stuart referred to the Scottish launch this year of the new 5 Year Strategy. This builds on our previous successes and states our belief in Scouting empowering young people with skills for life, bringing communities together and contributing to society. He summarised it with the statement "Above all, we aim to prepare young people for better futures". He went on to say that the plan for this was simple. We would support amazing leaders to deliver an inspiring programme and prepare more young people with skills for life. This plan contained four objectives; we would continue to grow the movement, become more inclusive, representing the communities in which we live, to be a movement shaped by young people in partnership with adults and to have a bigger impact in our communities.

He accepted that this plan would not be without its own challenges. He noted that many Scout Sections and Groups were full, there might be insufficient volunteers to open new sections and even then suitable, affordable meeting places might be hard to come by. He emphasized that this was a journey that we must embark on if we are to give more young people the opportunities and life changing experiences that he believed Scouting has to offer.

He announced that over the coming months and years Scouts Scotland would be working with UK Headquarters to support local Scouting by providing additional skills training, tools and resources to support the development of Scouting. We would start this later this month with a meeting of all Regional and District Commissioners in Scotland to discuss how they could approach the challenges in meeting our strategy.

Stuart closed his address by stating that Scouting encourages young people to be the best that they can be. We would give young people the confidence to dream big and the determination and drive to achieve their goals. Now we need to support our young people to break down social barriers, and enjoy happier futures. The plan could only be delivered if leaders, young people families and communities work together. It's the collective power of Scouting that would make our Movement bigger, stronger and have a greater impact. He added that "You are making a difference" and thanked those present for everything they were doing for Scouting in South East Region.

Stuart, supported by Margery Naylor, then presented the Award of Merit to:

- Allison Thomson Regional Appointments Secretary
- Allan Duff, GSL 103rd Braid
- Martin Browne, DC Midlothian

Martin was also presented with the Youth Approved Award in his capacity as YL Commissioner

Annual Review – led by Martin Elliott

The Annual Review, chaired by Martin Elliot, DRC, focused on the range of activities undertaken by young people over the past 12 months. Diane Marshall, DRC, gave a very upbeat presentation about the 2018 Blair Atholl camp; Alan Hunter, Manager of the Gang Show, spoke passionately about the Gang Show (and urged us all to buy tickets); Malcolm Leckie, Manager of the Longcraig Active Support Unit (ASU), spoke equally passionately about the fantastic opportunities for water activities offered by Longcraig; and Ronnie MacDonald spoke, most entertainingly, about the work of the Bonaly ASU.

Vote of Thanks by Martin Elliott, Deputy Regional Commissioner

Martin thanked everyone involved in meeting this evening which he described as interesting, inspiring and informative. In particular he mentioned the excellent presentations made by Diane and the three representatives from the Regional ASUs. He also thanked Stuart Imrie for his support and kind words about the progress made by the Region over the past year. Martin also singled out Liz Suttie and Malcolm Cutt who had made the venue available for the AGM and commented on the high standard of the facilities.

John B Cannon

Regional Chair

Margery Naylor

Regional Commissioner

John R Bruce

Regional Secretary