



## **Forth Region Scout Council**

# **Minutes of Annual General Meeting 2023**

**Thursday 9 November 2023 at 19.30 hrs**

**Scout Hall, Cairns Lane, Bo'ness EH51 9PF**

**Joint Presidents:** HRH The Princess of Wales, HRH The Duke of Kent. **Founder:** Robert Baden-Powell OM.  
**Chief Scout:** Lt Cdr (Hon) Bear Grylls RN  
**Regional Commissioner:** Mr Paul Santi  
**Registered Charity Number:** SC034493 (Scotland)

## Minutes

<b>1</b>	<b>Introduction</b> <p>The Chair, Gordon Samson, gave a warm welcome to everyone attending the meeting, noting that this was the first AGM since 2019 to be held face-to-face. 43 members were in attendance.</p> <p>Gordon also welcomed Barry Donald-Hewitt, Chief Commissioner of Scouts Scotland, Sandy Jack, President of Forth Region and Paul Santi, Region Commissioner to his first AGM.</p>
<b>2</b>	<b>Apologies</b> <p>14 apologies were received.</p>
<b>3</b>	<b>Minutes of previous meeting</b> <p>The minutes from the AGM held on Thursday 10 November 2022, which had previously been circulated, were accepted as accurate and approved on the motion of George Burnett, seconded by Sandy Jack.</p>
<b>4</b>	<b>Chairman's Report</b> <p>This covers the period April 2022 - March 2023 and has been issued to OSCR.</p> <p>This was the first year for quite some time that there was a feeling of a return to 'normality' as the Executive returned to face to face meetings over the entire year. At the outset of the year we also had a 'well kent' face as Acting Regional Commissioner, albeit only for a 6-month period, as our President, Sandy Jack, stepped into the breach as our search for a permanent Commissioner continued.</p> <p>We kicked off the year dealing with, amongst other matters, the ongoing oversight of funding and resources for the forthcoming World Scout Jamboree in 2023 as well as the more imminent Blair Atholl Jamborette later that year (2022). We were also faced with the financial challenge of being unable to utilise a very significant proportion of our funds which had been classified as 'restricted' by our auditors (quite correctly) and over the financial year of this report we were in protracted discussions with OSCR to try and resolve this. This impacted upon our ability to provide our usual levels of funding requests for training. We did however, agree to fund each District, 4 x £200, in respect of any mini bus driving qualifications they sought to achieve, which is a fairly significant commitment.</p> <p>As costs grew in relation to our previous venue for quarterly FRSC Executive meetings we also made the decision to try and move around the Region, utilising local Scout venues for same, the first being in Beechwood Scout Hall, Stirling, and we will continue in this vein moving forward.</p> <p>I am also very pleased to report that we were successful in appointing a new Regional Commissioner for Forth Region and Paul Santi (Falkirk Scouts) assumed the position on 26th August 2022, congratulations Paul! It was 'in at the deep end' for Paul and he has undergone the various national induction stages and is in the process of building and developing a Regional Team which we look forward to working with over the coming years. Given that there has been a significant period without a permanent Regional Commissioner 'at the helm' so to speak, I feel that some of the cohesion across Districts, understandably, may have dissipated and this is a challenge we will all tackle over coming months.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><b>cont'd/</b></p>

## Minutes

### 4 Chairman's Report (Cont'd)

It was with sadness that we learned that one of our trustees, Brian MacNeill, passed away during the year. His contribution to Scouts and to the committee was very much appreciated. He was always very open-minded and keen to share his thoughts. We send best wishes to his family.

We continue to rely on the outstanding level of commitment demonstrated by so many within Forth Region Scouting and, as ever, my particular thanks go to all those who volunteer, without whom we, and more importantly, the children and youths we support, could not function. I would also highlight the highly commendable work put in by our Regional Treasurer, Bob Anderson and Secretary Carol Cosgrove over the past year, without whom I could certainly not function!

### 5 Regional Commissioner's Report

As I started in post in September, this report covers the period from September 2022 to March 2023.

For the majority of troops and sections, scouting activities restarted in the autumn after the school summer break and several Explorer sections continued in their programs having never had a summer break. This highlights the level of enthusiasm the 14-18yr old section generates that many of the young members do not want to have a break from scouting. This can often be attributed to the "Blair Atholl" effect as many Explorers participate in the event and those that are not, wish to maintain being active.

Adult training was exceptionally well attended with many leaders attaining their wood badges and also many being re-certified in a variety of activity permits and compulsory ongoing training. A decision was taken by the region to withdraw financial support for adult training, unless under exceptional circumstances, which has not had a negative impact on any individual leader. This decision is under review based on feedback from districts.

Several new Squirrel Dreys have been created for the youngest members of the Scouts and these have been very well received and supported. With waiting lists growing for Squirrels, an emphasis in the region to open as many new sections as possible is high on the agenda for 23/24.

The financial position of the districts and groups on the whole is healthy and there have not been any major areas of concern to be addressed. I am keen for money to be spent on the young members in a manner which can have a long-lasting benefit, be it new equipment or hall updates and repairs. We are still in an economic downturn and anything we can do to ensure a young member can have a fulfilling and engaging experience in scouting is paramount.

The census figures in January 2023 showed that in the region, membership was at 3,414, which is still not at the 2020 level of 3,679, but growth is accelerating and it is hoped that we will achieve and surpass the 2020 level in January 2024. Adult volunteers were at 1,259 which is increasing since 2021, last year the figure sat at 1,186 and in 2021 it was 1,138. This is very encouraging as more adult volunteers has a direct relationship to youth membership.

As Scouts enters into the consultation period for the Transformation Program, we are aware of the impact and changes this will bring to everyone involved. The work for this is ongoing into 2024 and the support that will be provided will ensure a smooth transition for all involved and we await eagerly how we can incorporate the changes.

## Minutes

### 6 Financial Report

Treasurer Bob Anderson presented the Report of the Trustees and Financial Statements for the year ended 31 March 2023 copies of which had been made available. The Income and Expenditure Accounts were presented in OSCR format.

Bob provided the following update:

Scouting in the Forth Region is beginning to recover from the effects of the Covid pandemic and you will see from the Regional Commissioner's Report that numbers are now starting to rise again. We see Membership Fees began to recover following a reduction in recent years. As a result of this our Regional Levy also recovered which helped to cover the Region costs over the period. Marquee hire, which was one of our sources of income along with badge income is now moving forward again although a review of the ongoing use of the marquee, given its age, is now about to take place.

The General Fund continued to be used to facilitate the gathering of money for several events, including the Barrwood Fun Day, Blair Atholl Jamborette and the World Scout Jamboree in South Korea in 2023. We operate as a conduit for most of these funds which are subsequently paid out.

The Barrwood Fund Day income, after expenses, will be held for this event's use in future years, although the operation of this is also under review.

The granting of permission from OSCR to de-restrict all the funds held in two of our accounts was a welcome addition to our general funding which will now be used to support scouting in the region.

Future plans - The membership of the Scouts in Forth Region has recovered following the reduction seen during the Covid pandemic. It is anticipated that the numbers will continue to increase and will be hampered only by the lack of volunteers, although there are encouraging signs on this front also. There are no foreign trips planned during the coming year although it is the intention to keep this under review and two of our members will travel to Norway for Roverway in 2024. Should any trips be arranged in the near future these will be self-financing and not reliant on the Region. A review of the funds held will also take place to ensure the best use of our resources.

The Regional Levy, introduced in November 2016, remains the same at £1.50.

### 7 Approval / Election of Office Bearers

Chairman Gordon Samson vacated the Chair and Paul thanked him for his work over the past year as Region Chair. Paul then nominated Gordon to continue in this post which Gordon accepted and retook the Chair.

Bob Anderson was proposed by Lenny Jamieson to continue as Region Treasurer, seconded by Bill MacPherson.

Carol Cosgrove was proposed by Gordon Samson to continue as Region Secretary, seconded by Gordon Henderson.

These appointments were approved unanimously by the meeting.

### 8 Appointment of Auditors

Bob advised that he was still happy with French Duncan as Auditors, their work had always been satisfactory and on time.

French Duncan were confirmed as the Auditors for the Forth Region Council accounts.

## Minutes

<b>9</b>	<b>Election of District Nominees</b>  Stirling and Trossachs District - Anna Cowie was was elected to the Region Executive Committee in 2022. Anna advised that she was continuing in this post and therefore has a further 1 year to serve of her first term.  Clackmannanshire District - Louise Burnett was elected to the Region Executive Committee in 2022. Louise advised that she was continuing in this post and therefore has a further 1 year to serve of her first term.  Falkirk District - Christopher Campbell was elected to the Region Executive Committee for a second term in 2022 and therefore has a further 1 year to serve of his second term  The above appointments were approved unanimously at the meeting.  West Lothian District - Alex Brown stepped down in July. Gordon thanked Alex for his contribution to the committee. No nominations had been received to-date, however, if a nomination is provided in the future, they could be appointed by the Exec on an interim basis, to be approved at the next AGM.
<b>10</b>	<b>Election / Approval of Other Nominees</b>  Under the Region Byelaws, a fifth elected place is available on the Region Executive. There were no further nominations. This position is therefore vacant.  Last year Lewis McDermott was nominated by the Region Commissioner to serve on the Region Executive Committee. Lewis has stepped down from this post due to other work and scout commitments. Paul thanked Lewis for his contribution to the committee.
<b>11</b>	<b>Co-opted Members</b>  The meeting was reminded that the Executive Committee had the power to co-opt members as and when they felt there was a need but indicated no one was being co-opted at the present time.
<b>12</b>	<b>AOCB</b>  The following awards were presented: Hamish Scott: Silver Wolf Fiona Scott: Silver Acorn Struan Robertson: Scout of the World  The Chair thanked Hamish, Fiona and Struan for their contribution to Scouting. The Chair passed on Congratulations on behalf of the Exec.  The Chair thanked James Arkley for the use of the Bo'ness Scout hall.  Finally, Gordon stated "A big thank you to everyone for all your efforts over the past year" and closed the meeting at 9.00 pm.

