

WARE DISTRICT SCOUT COUNCIL

Annual Report 2017



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Introduction

The Trustees of Ware District Scout Council present their report and financial statement for the year ended 31 December 2016.

The Council's governing documents are those of The Scout Association. They consist of a Royal Charter which in turn gives authority to the Bye Laws of the Association and the Policy, Organisation and Rules of The Scout Association.

The Council is a trust established under its rules which are common to all Scouts.

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

The aim of the Association is to promote the development of young people in achieving their full physical, intellectual, social and spiritual potentials, as individuals, as responsible citizens and as members of their local, national and international communities. The Council's method of achieving the aim of the Association is by providing an enjoyable and attractive scheme of progressive training based on the Scout Promise and Law and guided by adult leadership.

Charity law requires the Trustees to prepare financial statements for each financial year that give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the Council and of its excess of income over expenditure for that period. In preparing those financial statements, the Trustees are required to:

- 1) select suitable accounting policies and apply them consistently;
- 2) make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- 3) follow applicable accounting standards, subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements;
- 4) prepare the financial statements on a going concern basis, unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charity will continue in operation.

The Trustees are responsible for keeping proper accounting records that disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the Council, enabling them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Standard Statements of Recommended Practice. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the Council and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

Legislation requires the protection of Young People to be scrutinized closely. It is the policy of The Scout Association to safeguard the welfare of all members by protecting them from physical, sexual and emotional harm. We, as a District Organization, are fully committed to complying with this policy in all respects and it is the responsibility of all our members over the age of 18 to ensure that this is done.

Legislation requires Health and Safety to be scrutinized. It is our policy to provide Scouting in a safe manner without risk to health, as far as is reasonably practicable, and to ensure that we comply with all the requirements of The Scout Association safety policy as laid out in the Policy Organisation and Rules of the Association.

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

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

District Chairman's Report

Scouting year 2016 will go down as a full year of not having a District Commissioner at our helm. We were supported by the County via Ian Leach, at Watford, however communications with him were becoming more difficult as the year progressed. It can go down to the dedication and professionalism of all the leaders in the District who carried Scouting on in the custom of Ware and District.

The District's growth during the year was 2%, bettering the County's 0.6% figure. The split of this was a small reduction in young people which was countered by a larger increase in adults. An interesting national statistic is that nearly four times as many girls joined Scouting during the year, as did boys.

The year will be remembered by us all for very two significant events. The first was the loss of Steven 'Barney' Barnard, who tragically lost his life in a road traffic accident in February. Barney was a Scout Leader at 3rd Ware, had a role with the older Explorers Scouts, was our District Network Commissioner and a senior leader of the annual County 'Introduction to the Hills' (ITTH). Dozens of our adults and Young Leaders wrote many tributes to him, centring on Barney improving the lives of everyone he came into contact with. A former employer, Arriva, has named one of their 12 new busses on the 310 route after him, as a lasting tribute. Secondly was the loss of John Crown, who was 3rd Ware Scout Group's Secretary, the District Appointments Secretary, and a manager at the Scout Shop. John had spent his whole life in Scouting, and in recent years had spent time with the working party at the County's activity centre at Lochearnhead in Scotland. The commitment and dedication of both Barney and John will be sorely missed in our District.

Early in the year, the County decided it could not renew the leases on two of its seven activity centres, Orchard Farm in the Peak District, and Coetmor Mill in Snowdonia, for financial reasons. Over the years our leaders and Explorers (previously the Ventures) had given a vast amount of their free time toward its upkeep, and many of our Groups and Units had made it their base for their outdoor adventures over the years. The Farm and the Mill are a sad loss to everyone at Ware and District.

The year's celebration has been the Cubs' Centenary. An excellent exhibition at Ware Museum, organised by a Cub Leader at 3rd Ware, ran until January last year, and in June the District held a weekend Camp at Gilwell. All but one Cub Packs enjoyed the adventurous activities, the remaining Pack attending a similar event run by the County. Their year concluded with the Promise Party at Harlow Sports Centre on the 16th December, with the Cub Promise being renewed with all the Cubs Worldwide, at precisely 19.16pm.

There has been slow progress regarding the deteriorating condition of the District Headquarters building. A survey of the membership the previous year showed 73% in favour of retaining a headquarters. Discussions have been rather protracted with East Herts Council, regarding a long lease on the site, which would enable us to start a project for a complete rebuild, and the necessary funding. We continue to take on essential maintenance work in the meantime.

I would like to thank and congratulate all of our leaders, helpers, and committee members in our District, the Scout Groups and the Explorers and Network who work tirelessly for long hours providing adventurous, exciting, challenging, fun and enjoyable Scouting, and also our ASU members who run the Scout Shop and help at various scouting events, and the Appointments committee and our local training manager. We can proudly say our achievements are a measure of our success during 2016.

Martin Vaughan - District Chairman

District Commissioners Report

As the new District Commissioner (since January 2017) it's my job to report to the District Exec AGM on the running of the District Team for Ware & District. This is the small team of people that help manage the Scouting side of things in the District.

Upon my appointment as DC, my role as ADC Scouts became vacant, and our ADC Beavers and ADC Cubs had stood down prior to that, so as DC I had no Assistant District Commissioners to work with.

The District Team has had a turbulent time over the last few years, maybe as many as 10 years. We've had caretaker DCs, a few short term DCs and covering DCs, all doing their best but unable to give direction to any sort of district development or consistency. I have my work cut out trying to bring together the district's groups to form a whole rather than the 8 'fiefdoms' the groups currently operate as.

The Group Scout Leaders in all the groups are District appointments and are there to represent the District in the running of the group and despite many years of little input or direction from District have done a sterling job keeping their groups on track. Even the groups with no GSL are managing quite well and keep ticking along doing excellent work, but moving forward as a District we need to be more than our individual parts, or groups.

Initially I plan to expand the District team:

- We've appointed a District Youth Commissioner - Harry Bonfield of 5th Ware - to start the process of building better communication channels with the Young people and the District team.
- We've appointed an ADC Cubs, Karen Hale, our former DC who is an excellent fit for this role with her years of experience with Stanstead Abbots cubs.
- We have appointed an ADC Beavers, Lynn Isham, an experienced Beaver leader – another excellent fit who also has years of experience with Stanstead Abbots.
- We have a new Network coordinator Phil Clayden who is working with Adam West and Dano to keep our Network Scouts busy and engaged. Phil has years of experience with Great Amwell scouts.
- Sue our Training Manager stood down recently after years of service. Whilst she will undoubtedly be missed I have lined up a replacement who will hopefully take up this role in September (subject to approval by County), charged with cutting a swathe through the validations needed to complete each leader's training programme. This person has been in scouting in another District for some 20 years or so and her day job has involved academic quality which should make her an excellent candidate for the role.

I'm working with Keith and Dano on overhauling the handling of Young Leaders across the District with alternative charging methods to groups to simplify the finance side and encourage YLs to also participate in Explorer activities.

We are also looking at OSM usage across the District and trying to pull all sections into the 21st Century.

So we've already started to make changes and, as we as a team get our heads around the needs of the district, we hope to do more to see that we all gain from working together in the true spirit of Scouting.

I must thank all the rest of the team for their hard work including the appointments committee and Bob our Nights Away Adviser, as well as the ASU headed up by Peter Raymen. If I have forgotten anyone please don't take it personally! Here's to the next year in scouting.

Pat Horridge, District Commissioner

Scout Active Support Unit

The Active Support Unit continues to provide help and support to all the groups in our District who I am pleased to say are taking advantage of our help and assistance. We, of course, always do the usual tea making and coffees etc., at the main District events and District and Executive meetings. We have a small social calendar which is always well attended including our Annual Dinner at Fanhams Hall in February which is always enjoyed by all. We have helped out, as usual, with marshalling and manning bases at all District and County competitions and our calendar, so far, for 2017/2018 is getting quite full. We have 32 Active Support members who have various roles in the District including appointments committee, nights away permits, training advisors, badge secretaries and, of course, our shop which is managed by Jim Smith and his team. I, of course, will also continue my role as County Active Support Manager. We look forward to getting involved with all the major Scout, Cub and Beaver events again this year and I would like to thank all the ASU members who have helped me make it a most enjoyable year with their support. I am looking forward to promoting and expanding the ASU Units within the groups throughout the coming year

Peter Raymen – Scout Active Support Unit Manager

1st Braughing Group Scout



Group Numbers

In 2016 young people aged 6 to 14 were provided with a full and active scouting programme by a dedicated team of volunteers. The maximum numbers in each of the sections at any one time were Beavers 18, Cubs 40 and Scouts 18. The band are always looking for new members.

There are young people on our waiting lists for both Beavers and Cubs who we will not be able to offer a place within the Group. In December 2016, in response to falling scout numbers, we took the decision to suspend scouts making the troop dormant. Pat Horridge (District Commissioner) and our Scout Leaders are working on solutions to reopen/ensure places are available for Cubs moving on.

Activities

The individual section reports contained within our own 2016 Review demonstrated the mix of opportunities and activities offered throughout the group. As a group we supported many of the District run events, both as participants and organisers. Our thanks to all who enabled these events to take place.



Our band, the only one in the County, celebrated its 40th birthday this year. They supported both local and District events as part of their programme. Leopard Colony supported many of the District events as well as being eager beavers at their weekly meetings as they worked towards a number of badges



and their Chief Scout Bronze Award, with Awards being completed and presented. Cheetah and Puma packs were BUSY! as they celebrated Cub 100. Hundreds of individual badges were awarded as well as 11 Chief Scout Silver Awards.

Scouting highlights included the Lightweight Challenge, the climbing wall at Harlow, Remembrance day services at Standon and Braughing and the District swimming gala.

Leadership Team

It was a huge disappointment when Simon Marlow resigned as GSL in June, his period as GSL lasting for less time than the appointment process to invest him in post. We are grateful to him for his work in getting to know us all and in representing us at District level during his time in office.

The supportive ethos of the group was evident throughout the year with leaders and parents stepping in to help out as required. HUGE THANKS to all who enabled our young people to experience the amazing opportunities available through the scouting movement.

Our Executive Committee consists of 3 independent representatives: Chair, Treasurer and Secretary together with the Group Scout Leader (when in post), individual section leaders and parent representatives. They work hard to ensure the group has the facilities and resources needed to deliver good scouting throughout all of the sections. My thanks to every one of the leadership team for their continued support throughout the year.

Subscriptions

Our subscription rates are among the lowest in the District. Over 40% of the subscription is spent on National, County and District Capitation fees. We use Gift Aid claimed moneys to subsidise the regular section activities, enabling us to keep the cost of scouting as low as possible.

Fundraising and Maintaining Our Profile

We were involved in the local May Day celebrations, Open Gardens, Wheelbarrow Fair, Remembrance Day services and parades, Christmas Tree Festival and Martin's Lights. The Rolling Rock proved very popular with young and old alike at May Day!

Wendy Smith – Chair, Executive Committee

Buntingford Scout Group

After another busy year in 2016 and all the changes within the group from changes with leaders and on the Executive Committee, members have still been able to concentrate on supporting the Scout Group and arranging fundraising events to raise money for the Group.

The remainder of the scout loan has been paid and the account is now settled.

Despite some changes we have had a good year for fundraising; every event held was well supported and money poured in. The annual raffle was received very well and we will be looking to hold this event again for 2017.

We had a very successful stall on the High Street along with Santa for Late Night Shopping, which saw large crowds of people attending as well as putting the Scout presence back in the high street among the community.

Also we had our Easter egg tombola at the COOP after a year's break, which the young people really enjoyed being involved in.

Other events include a Quiz night held at the Scout Hut was well attended.

We also took part for the first time in over 10 years in the carnival, Santa and his reindeers performed well for the theme "animal antics" we won a trophy for "Best Children's float".

Our fundraising year ended as always with Father Christmas on his grand tour of Buntingford, which was the best year so far! I would like to thank all of our young people who have helped with the fundraising and also the parents who have helped to man stalls or provided help, support for any of the events over the past year.

Monies raised goes towards the maintenance and running cost of the Scout Headquarters, buying new equipment, providing uniform for new leaders. The Executive Committee was also very pleased to be able to keep the cost of subscriptions unchanged for the following year. I hope you will all agree that scouting in Buntingford is excellent value for money.

I would like to thank the members of Ware and District Scouts for their continued help & support to our Group.

The Group cannot be successful without the dedication of our Leaders who each week provide a range of activities for their sections, provide a listening ear to the young people sharing the highlights and the lows of each week and help to guide them on to learn new skills, achieve new goals and to become independent, confident young people. We should all be very proud of our Leaders and their achievements.

I would like to thank all parents, leaders and young people that were involved and joined the Family Camp which we started this year and was held at Alswick. Despite the weather we had a fantastic weekend where parents and young people were able to compete in a Pit stop Challenge and race their go karts! We were also joined by Karen and Dee for traditional songs around the bonfire. We will be holding a Family Camp this year from the 8th – 10th September.

Thanks are also due to our Treasurer who spends endless hours keeping our books balanced. To Ahmet and Nigel for managing the lettings of the HQ seamlessly over the past year. Thanks also goes to Ian and Emma for their continued support behind the scenes in helping the leaders and the executive committee run smoothly in many aspects and to all of the members of the Executive Committee who all work very hard to ensure a well organised Scout Group.

Finally on behalf of the Group I would like to thank our Group Scout Leader Joanne McNamara who has not only found time in 2016 to take on the roles of Beaver Leader, cub leader when necessary, helped our new Leaders to learn their new role and has worked tirelessly to ensure that the very best of scouting is provided here in Buntingford.

I look forward to another year of fun & friendship in scouting.

Kay Hamilton-Crook, Chairperson Group Executive

Great Amwell Scout Group

Time for another annual report...how time flies when you're having fun!

Another successful year for Great Amwell Scout Group with all sections enjoying strong support. This year's census showed an increase in numbers,

with support from a strong leadership team delivering a range of activities for our young people to enjoy.

As always our members have participated in a full range of activities within their sections, and at group and district events. You can see a summary of the activities that the Beavers, Cubs and Scouts have been enjoying in each of the section reports provided by the leaders.

I would like to give my personal thanks to Gail Stretch (Assistant GSL) for all of her help, without her, the group would not run so smoothly. Of course, my thanks goes to all the leaders, young leaders, executive members, helpers and supporters of the group for your continued hard work and dedication which has contributed to making Great Amwell Scout Group a very popular, successful and active member of the District.

I would also like to thank parents for their positive response in supporting the group's activities and hope that this continues. Our activities within the wider community are always a good advert for the group.

Following the success of our first Group Camp we will be running with this format again. This year we are going off site for our activities with lots of new and interesting things for our young people to take part in.

The HQ remains a valuable asset to the local community with people using the hall all through the week. Thanks to Pearl for maintaining the bookings. We have been granted planning permission for a permanent storage building to be constructed in place of the containers and it is hoped that work can start on this in the summer months.

We are fortunate as a group to have enthusiastic volunteers as both uniformed leaders and the executive committee and I would like to thank our Chairman, Andy Verdin, for his continued support of the group. I hope that we can continue to work with the rest of the team to promote Scouting within the Group and the District.

We have an established leadership team who are committed to delivering a balanced programme to our members and undertake training as required. However, uniformed leaders are only part of our diverse leadership team and we are always happy to receive any offers of help, no matter how infrequent.

The targets for the group over the coming year are:

- to maintain and develop the Group and its Executive,
- to decorate the interior of the hall and maintain the grounds,
- encourage new young people to join our group.

We are very fortunate that our funds are healthy at the moment, however we are having to pay out more bills for the upkeep of the hall. Our funds are kept healthy by the group's involvement in a number of set fundraising activities throughout the year. The fireworks display and Ware Carnival are great opportunities for us to raise the profile of the group, help our community and also to raise much needed funds. In order for us to continue to benefit from these events we need parent support. If you are able to help out at these or other events, please contact our Chairman, Andy Verdin. The more help we get at these events the better!

During the year we had an operating surplus on general funds and activities of £8,192.02 which will be utilised in the coming year. At 31st January 2017 we had cash of £60,682.25 in general funds and no designated reserves.

The Group has identified the major risks to which it is exposed and follows the policies and rules of the Scout Association to deal with them.

I thank all those in the Group leadership team and helpers who have made the last year of Scouting happen. The future for the Group will need help from parents and new leaders; we can continue delivering an exciting and challenging range of activities in the future.

Julie Greaves - Group Scout Leader

Hunsdon Scout Group

This is my second AGM in the role of Acting GSL. Since this time last year the Group has been involved in a wide range of activities, some new and some well-established events. Ask any leader and they will tell you how rewarding it is and how much fun we have in the leader teams both in the

sessions and when we are away at events. Personally I am keen to continue supporting all our members and developing Scouting in Hunsdon, keeping in touch with changes in Scouting, and above all making sure that we are providing the sort of Scouting opportunities the young people want.

Hunsdon Scout Group had very successful year in 2016 with our most notable achievements being the Scouts' 3rd place in the Lightweight Camping Competition and their highest ever finish in Green Beret. The Cubs narrowly missed a win at the Go Karts, took 2nd place in the Oxley Shield Competition, and were winners of the Wildgoose Shield. Beavers have had their own success and since our last AGM we have invested a whole new leader team and the Beavers in Hunsdon are flourishing under their leadership. Well done all!

We are very lucky to have such energetic and inspired leaders for each section who, together with 3 Young Leaders, are doing a fabulous job of devising fun activities and organising adventures for the Beavers, Cubs and Scouts. We are listening to the young people too and adapting our program to make sure it is relevant and appealing. Scouting is so much more than a session in the village hall - those meetings are just the beginning - so a big thank you goes to all the leaders for sharing their skills and time to make it all possible.

Hunsdon Scout Group enjoys all the Scouting events on offer in Ware and District, joining in with the activities ranging from Easter egg hunts and craft days for Beavers, to skills and fun events for Cubs and Scouts such as Camping and Cooking competitions, Swimming Galas, Fun Run and Go Karts. On St George's Day following the parade, The Peter Geer Trophy, an award established by a former 2nd Ware Scouter who believed that participating was more important than winning alone, is presented to the highest-scoring group. By supporting the district events in strong numbers, each group earns points. Those of you who came along on St George's Day a few weeks ago will know how just surprised we were to discover that Hunsdon had won the shield this year!

It's a great achievement for a small group. Thank you for your support.

Behind the scenes in every Scout group, is an executive committee who carry out administrative tasks to ensure that high quality safe Scouting is available

for all its members. They support the leader teams, ensuring they have all the resources they need and they look after the finances of the group. I really appreciate the continued support of our team, especially from Mike (Group Chair), Robin (Group Treasurer), and Rosalino (Secretary). In addition to being our Chair, Mike also looks after the annual Gift Aid claim which is crucial to helping us to maintain a healthy financial position.

Thank you to all the families who support us in a wide variety of ways (too many to list here), and who join in on the parent helper rotas. We are also grateful for the offers of help from members of our community who willingly share their skills for the benefit of the young people.

If you'd like to come and join in the fun we would certainly love to hear from you. We have a particularly busy term coming up so there are lots of ways you can help out if you are interested. Why not give it a try!

Yours in Scouting,

Karen Osterley – Acting Group Scout Leader

1st Stanstead Abbotts & St Margaret's Scout Group

This is my first report as Group Chair having taken on the role at the last annual meeting. Thanks to my predecessor Andy Goldthorpe for his help and guidance in ensuring a smooth handover.

The Group remains one of the largest in the County. Today we have around 150 Beavers, Cubs and Scouts and more than 40 adult volunteers. More importantly we are recognized by our peers and parents alike as being a highly successful community asset, delivering an outstanding experience to our young people. The credit rests mainly with our section leaders and their assistants, but the people behind the scenes also make a difference.

Highlights and achievements, of which there are many, are detailed in our Group's annual report.

Our continued growth brings with it challenges, particularly with the Scout Troop meeting across two sites. We have made progress on our development of options for a new building for our HQ, for which I would like to thank Mark

and Amanda Stewart for their advice, guidance and work on preparing the required documentation. I would also like to thank David Jupp (MD French & Jupps) for his support. We will now have to do some further work to be able to show whether other locations might be feasible and the not minor detail of securing funding.

A constant challenge is having enough Leaders to run all our sections, meeting the high standards we seek to maintain. I am delighted that this year we have had considerable success in recruiting adult volunteers into leader roles. It is always helpful to have parent volunteers to help with activities. Having done it myself before taking on this role, I know it is also great fun for the parents themselves so if you want to have a go just let your child's section leader know you are willing and have a go!

We continue to have a committed and active Executive Committee, comprising a balance of Leaders and parents, as is our aim over the long-term. My thanks to those Leaders and parents who have contributed this year, either on the Executive Committee or in other roles, and to those who have committed to do so over the coming year.

Gavin Miles – Chair, Executive Committee

2nd Ware (St Mary's) Scout Group

The group has had another very successful year, with numbers growing and our largest census return. Even our waiting list is growing to the extent that we are even considering an extra Beaver colony. Only the old chestnut of not enough leaders stops this from happening!

Most of our sections have carried on with pretty much the same leader teams with a few new additions: Jay, Charlotte and Dan, who I would like to welcome. The notable exception to this is Thundridge Cubs where Jenny Matthews has stepped back as Akela after so many years in charge passing the reins on to Tom Martin. Jenny retains the role of ACSL, but we would like to thank her for all her efforts over the years and wish her well for the future. And we must wish Tom good luck in his new role.

As ever we have been present at all the district events and competitions, with great success. It is true that being there , taking part and most of all enjoying it are the most important thing, winning is nice, so I would like to congratulate our teams that we successful in the Oxley Shield , Cub Fun Run , the Scouts Cooking Competition (District and County!) and the Green Beret Boot.

It is also good to see our young people getting away on non-competition camps , The cubs at Rigery , Gilwell, and Phasels, the scouts with a busy week in Dorset with such things as Coasteering and paddleboarding and a trip to Monkey World. The beavers had a couple of sleepovers and this year even they are going camping! Good luck with that Sarah!

It does seem to me that while we embrace a lot of the more modern activities from the programme, given a choice kids of ALL ages often like nothing better than sitting round a fire in the woods (preferably with a stick to poke it with)!

Finally I need to thank all the leader teams across the sections, the Executive Committee members , Young Leaders and parents who all keep this finely oiled machine working. Without you things wouldn't happen and the young people wouldn't get all the fun and excitement that they do. Keep up the great work. Thank You!

Jerry Pollard - Group Scout Leader

3rd Ware Scout Group

2016 has been a mixture of highs and lows for our Group. The Beavers, Cubs and Scouts have enjoyed a fully packed programme of adventures. Our Leaders and Young Leaders have done a wonderful job. Our six sections are bursting at the seams.

However, the year was overshadowed by the sudden and tragic loss of Barney, a good friend and inspirational leader of our Young People.



"I hope they didn't break the mould as the world needs more people like Steven"

We are grateful for those that have supported us and assisted through this difficult time for all. Our leader team has really stepped up to continue the support for our Scouts who have coped admirably. Scouting is truly a family who support each other through good times and bad.

He had one ~~a~~, massive impact on my life, when I had forgotten my sleeping bag on camp, he gave up his for my comfort. we miss you loads...

I loved my first camp with Barney when we ~~we~~ were all sitting round the fire and we were all messing around and having fun.

I remember the first camp I went on with Barney, it was a weekend trip in which we did parascending. It was amazing! I had hayfever, and Barney told me to toughen up! That made me laugh!

We have had a great time having Barney as ~~a~~ a leader, we will never forget you. LEGEND.

When I first came to scouts I was quite nervous but as soon as I saw Barney ~~and~~ next to an arm wrestle with a older scout I knew he was ~~going to~~ be the coolest scout leader ever.

When we went to the river, slack-lining, Barney pushed people in the river. And we all got soaking wet,

Gavin Matthews - Group Scout Leader

5th Ware (Christ Church) Scout Group

Another full-on year of scouting and yet another second place in Peter Geer. If there was an award for coming second, 5th Ware would win this hands down having come second 4 times in the past 5 years. And once again we missed the top spot by less than a Beavers arm. I am so proud of my section leaders for their commitment to providing the opportunity.

I have reported every year that our biggest challenge as a Group has been storage. This year I am delighted to say that we now have a positive story to tell. In the past two months we received a very generous donation of three 8' storage containers. On behalf of the Group I would like to thank all those involved in the sourcing, supply, delivery and other logistics – it took a lot of people. I need to also thank the many members of the Scout Network and Leaders from various Groups who helped to move these containers in to their final positions and of course, Christ Church School who have allowed us the space for this storage. We will soon be in receipt of a further 20' container that we will be donating to the School in return for their generosity.

As a Group, we realise that we are so lucky to have the strong support from our parents and supporters. I see so many of them when they bring their child to section meetings and events, and I thank them for coming along to help us out in Beavers and Cubs. We actually have a very small ratio of adult Leaders

to young people, and whilst these adults are some of the most enthusiastic in the District, we are still reliant on the additional help that we can get from time to time.

Obviously I would be delighted to welcome any of them to join our Leader team but I have stopped asking them to consider being a Leader but instead challenge them all to volunteer on just one occasion a year. In 2017, I am encouraging my Leaders to create even more adventure and even more challenge but many of these Leaders have families themselves and I cannot expect them to volunteer even more evenings and weekends. Therefore

parental support can allow us to run activities when our full team is not available. Perhaps they could even inspire us to do something new that they, their children or their whole family would enjoy also.

Every year, at the end of January, we report our Census numbers. We were slightly down this year mainly due to not as many Beavers starting in the new year as expected. The competition for spaces in the District and nationally is high and parents (quite reasonably) join waiting lists for several Groups at the same time. We also lose contact with some parents in the couple of years between when they join the list and when their child is old enough to start. We have now filled many of these places and consider ourselves full in both Beavers and Cubs.

The Group has started to think about how we can help meet these needs. It would be simple to say that we could start a new Beaver Colony and then another Cub Pack but the realities of doing so throw up many obstacles. We are very lucky and grateful to Christ Church for the use of the halls but they have to spread their charity across the whole of the town and it would be difficult to secure additional slots on other days.

Nationally Scouting is promoting a Youth Shaped culture as we respond to the changing interests of our younger members. We will not forego many of our traditional Scouting skills such as camping, knotting and hiking, but look to supplement these with new technology such as social media and geo-caching. The Scouting ethos and methods have not changed, we will just adapt them to resonate better with young people today.

I am running out of space and I have not mentioned last year's successful Group camp. It is a lot of work to make this event happen every year but there is huge satisfaction when I see the tired but happy young people on the Saturday night sitting side by side with their own parents. I am sure this year's camp will be equally as good – in fact it is already bigger. We are lucky to have an experienced catering team to see us through the weekend and food appears to be available from 7am through to 2am!

A quick goodbye also to our first two Scouts to have reached the ripe old age of 14. Kieran & Jack have now left the Group and we wish them well and hope they remain in Scouting. This is a milestone for 5th Ware and there are many more soon to follow.

Finally, a big thank you to Darren, James, Chris, Michaela, Natalie, Nicky, Harry, Rowan and Lisa for all their continued hard work as Leaders. A big thank you also to Miles who has remained in the Group as my Assistant Group Scout Leader, and to Becca who was part of our Scouts Leader team until she moved away from the area.

Colin Piper – Group Scout Leader