

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE SEVENOAKS DISTRICT SCOUT COUNCIL

**HELD ONLINE (Zoom) MEETING
On THURSDAY, 10th December 2020**

Prior to the meeting commencing the District Chairman, Anthony Hitchings, sought the agreement of those in attendance for the meeting to be recorded given unprecedented circumstances of hosting a virtual District AGM online. There were no objections made.

A short video titled 'Scouts made me' played before the business part of the Annual General Meeting commenced at 8.00pm.

1. Chair's welcome and apologies for absence

Anthony Hitchings welcomed everyone to the meeting and introduced dignitaries in turn - The Vice-Chair of Sevenoaks District Council, Cllr. Diana Elser with her husband and consort Michael Pearsall; The Mayor of Sevenoaks, Cllr. Nicholas Busvine OBE; Neil Gearing as representative of the County Commissioner for Kent Scouts.

Apologies were received from:

Sevenoaks District Chairman, Cllr John Edwards-Winser; Anne Perry and Sarah Norsworthy - Girl Guiding; Revd. MacLeay (St. Nicholas Church); Chris McCann (3rd); Chris Mears (7th); Kelly Williams; Jerry McCahill; Angie Davie; Tess Robson (15th); Carl Ellmer (4th).

2. Minutes of the 2019 AGM

These were not read but made available on the District website and members of the Sevenoaks District Scout Council notified in advance of the meeting.

3. Matters arising from the Minutes of the 2019 AGM

There were no comments or matters arising.

Anthony Hitchings recommended to the meeting the 2019 AGM Minutes be accepted as an accurate record of the meeting; P'nut (Stuart) Holden duly seconded the Chairman's recommendation; those in attendance completed an online poll, 96% in favour and 1% abstaining, the meeting adopted the Minutes of the last AGM.

4. Chair's report

Anthony reflected on the close of the Annual Report at the end of March when the Coronavirus pandemic significantly changed the life of everyone involved in Scouting and thanked everybody in Sevenoaks for completing Risk Assessments, progressing face to face scouting, hosting virtual meetings and camps.

Anthony acknowledged the District Executive and thanked those who provided their reports in advance of meetings for reading and preparation enabling swift action as necessary; the Executive involved in Budget planning which included Activity equipment (kayaking, fencing and first aid) and helping with recruitment (gazebo and signage purchased).

Anthony summarised the objectives set by the Executive in the past year - to Streamline District bank accounts under management; documenting annual payments for intercompany and regular payments; improving intercompany management of the shop, badges and Explorers; assisting with the plans for

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Seal HQ; utilising technology to aid District communication, offering training on systems such as OSM and GSuite; helping to provide better transition of Scouts to Explorers; providing a District Explorer camp; reworking the appointment's process. Pleased to say good progress was made on all the objectives.

Anthony thanked Jeanette for her support as District Secretary with knowledge of POR and how scouting works, attention to detail and enthusiasm for scouting.

5. District Commissioner's Report and Acknowledgements

On behalf of the DC Team Jo Brookbank addressed the meeting expressing thanks to Anthony for his invaluable support to the DC Team and District Executive; thanking everyone for communication which has been challenging but improving and reminded all to keep in touch with their GSLs, DC Team and Chairmen.

- The presentation slide showed:
"The District continued to thrive in the year to March 2019 and in the months following the year end the District has risen to challenges we could never have imagined. Although 2020 is not the year we are reporting on, it is uppermost in our thoughts and our thanks go out to all who are keeping Scouting alive in the District."

6. Treasurer's Report and Approval of the Accounts for the year ending 31st March 2020

Samantha Devenney presented the Accounts to the meeting and thanked those who assisted addressing queries as the reports compiled. Significant progress made - moving the Year End to 31st March; working to streamline bank accounts and manage finances; Continue to work on Budgets and spend vs budget for the year.

With no questions or queries raised regarding the accounts Anthony thanked Sam for looking after the District's finances and invited those in attendance to complete the online poll for approval of the accounts; with 100% in favour the Annual Accounts accepted by the meeting.

7. Acceptance of District Commissioner's Nominations for the District Executive Committee

Michael addressed the meeting for the following Nominations –

- a. Chair: On behalf of the DC-Team thanked Anthony for a brilliant job done in the role of District Chair and Anthony agreed to volunteer for another year.
The DC-Team nominated Anthony Hitchings as District Chair and invited those present to complete the online poll for approval; with 100% in favour; Anthony was re-elected by the meeting.
- b. Nominated Members: The DC-Team nominated the following –
Jennifer Baker-Hirst, David Martin, Karen Wilson, Angela Davie, William Morrish and Nigel Rainey.
The meeting was invited to complete the online poll for approval; with 100% in favour, these nominations were accepted.

8. Election of members of the District Executive Committee

Anthony addressed the meeting for the following elections –

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- a. As detailed on the presentation slide the names of the six nominations received together with proposers and seconders) as follows:

<u>Nomination:</u>	<u>Proposer:</u>	<u>Secunder:</u>
Tom McKeen	Kelly Williams	Katie McCreadie
Michael Schwarz	Rose Mears	John Talbot
Bertie Downard	Chris McCann	Paul Heath
Erik Barrow	Owen Compton	Rob Francis
Russell Porter	Steve Aish	Christine Skeels
Nick Roberts	Ali Miller	Kevin McDonnell

As there were more places than nominees, Anthony recommended the meeting vote en bloc all six nominations by completing the online poll; unanimous 100% in favour of the aforementioned nominations.

- b. Secretary: Anthony introduced Claire Strickland who was nominated for the role of District Secretary by Jennifer Baker-Hirst and seconded by Ian Manuel; the meeting completed the online poll and with 100% in favour Anthony welcomed Claire onboard.
- c. Treasurer: Anthony recommended the re-election of Samantha Devenney as District Treasurer; Andrew Holland proposed the election and Bertie Downard seconded the proposal; the meeting completed the online poll, 100% in favour, the meeting accepted the re-election.

9. Appointment of Independent Examiner

Anthony confirmed that Alan Copleston has agreed to volunteer to be our Independent Examiner for the forthcoming year's accounts; P'nut (Stuart) Holden proposed Alan Copleston as Independent Examiner, Jennifer Trigg seconded the proposal; those in attendance completed an online poll, with 100% in favour the appointment carried unanimously.

10. County Representative

Anthony advised Chris Barrow is currently volunteering to represent the District (role open to a volunteer on an ad hoc basis). Chris stated he is happy to continue in the role although he had not been called upon in the past two years.

Anthony invited Neil Gearing to address the meeting –

Neil introduced himself as one of the Deputy County Commissioners' (DCC) and stated great to see so many on 'zoom' call including the Councillors and Mayor showing support from outside scouting; acknowledged Nigel Rainey who escaped Dartford District (and County) but good to know Nigel supporting Sevenoaks scouting; One of Neil's tasks as DCC is supporting DCs around the County and has a small team that includes Elaine Greenwood who has worked well with the DC Team – Thank you Elaine; Neil recommended everyone involved with the 'zoom' meeting should all receive their IT Stage 3 badge so get your orders into the Badge Secretary.

On behalf of Kent Scouts Neil offered a huge 'Thank You' for all you have done, particularly over the last several months – very challenging as HQ badgering 'compliance' of DCs and all adults to ensure leaders, executive members and Active Support trained to level they signed up for; currently highlighted 'Safety' and 'Safeguarding' requiring you to sit through 2 online videos of 30-40 minutes;

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HQ set target of 5% compliance in Districts, which at the start Sevenoaks at 26% but with valiant efforts of Michael and Jo plus Group Scout Leaders in the past few months only 8% of adults non-compliant. A huge 'Thank You' and apologies to GSLs for chasing, with DCs in the middle in completing risk assessments - reading, reviewing and approval adding extra time on top of Covid-19 restrictions yet providing scouting in whatever form possible. Next year will see the need for more risk assessments across all aspects of scouting so the county team is working on templates to assist those who signed up to engage young people in scouting.

The annual membership fee set by HQ seen a massive increase by £7.50 and the selling of BP House (in London) along with offloading several campsites deemed non-viable for The Scout Association's overheads; Kent Scouts reviewed its overheads and budgets, reducing its element of the annual membership fee by £5.00 to help bridge the predicted 20-25% downfall in youth membership and difficulties going ahead. Should Groups struggle financially, do consult with the DC Team and County; HQ will fund 10% for most needed Groups; please look on the HQ website for more information and ensure we succeed to see children enjoy scouting.

Neil expressed County's appreciation of young people and parents supporting scouting and wished everyone present a "Merry Christmas."

11. Address by invited guests

- The Mayor of Sevenoaks Town, Nicholas Busvine, considered scouting's "can do spirit" helped everyone get through the challenges over the past year; scouting's "leading by example" has given hope and optimism for Sevenoaks residents; concluded with "Thank you and Merry Christmas."
- Vice-Chairman of Sevenoaks District Council, Cllr. Diana Esler, aware of the benefits scouting offers young people having been a member of Brownies and Girl Guiding in her youth, as a parent with her sons attending Cubs and Scouts and a leader during her teaching career; wonderful to see inclusivity provided to girls and boys; expressed thank you for the invitation.
- A video clip of Tim Kidd's address to Kent Scouts at their County AGM played.

12. Any Other Business appropriate to an AGM (previously notified)

None received.

Anthony invited P'nut (Stuart) Holden to address the meeting on an update of Downe Campsite being sold with a £2million price tag as part of HQ financial realignment – P'nut advised immense local support to keep Downe for scouting and invited by Jo to attend a meeting with DCs and Chairs of Bromley and Bexley (Greater London and South East County) and representatives of Tonbridge, Malling, Guildford and Sevenoaks Districts; initial discussions and financial position to develop plan and put forward proposal to maintain and keep Downe in scouting; documentation to be submitted by 14th December; it will involve setting up charitable organisation; estimated £2.5million investment for purchase and improve site facilities for external group usage, 60-70% scouting with site made viable for schools; plan to apply to The Scout Association(TSA) for 45 year lease rather than outright purchase with charity trust to raise funding. Jo thanked P'nut for attending the meeting and stated will continue to maintain support from Sevenoaks.

13. Presentations

Anthony expressed "Thank you" to Jeanette Schwarz as out-going Secretary, who started scouting in September 1991 and in January 2013 commenced 8 years' service as District Secretary; Anthony

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added that due to unusual circumstances of 'zoom' meeting, Jeanette would find flowers on the doorstep outside her house and a gift of appreciation – vase and more flowers – will be on its way too. Michael added 'Thank you' on behalf of the DC Team adding that Jeanette had served much longer on the District Executive in other roles too.

On behalf of the DC-Team Jo acknowledged the following:

- Erik Barrow for support as IT wizard and continuing updates of websites, setting up challenges, fundraising for Kilimanjaro and supporting Lucy Morgan with the Antarctica project.
- Elaine Greenwood as County's appointed DC support who continues to provide support and guidance as "agony aunt," telling them off and giving right advice.

On behalf of the DC-Team Michael acknowledged:

- John Talbot who stepped down as Group Scout Leader (GSL) of 10th Sevenoaks (Weald's Own) Group; John has been involved in scouting for many years and expressed 'thank you' from Jo and himself.

On behalf of the DC-Team Jo acknowledged:

- Lynne Rutherford who stepped down as GSL of 16th Sevenoaks (Ide Hill) Group.
- Jonathan Booth who stepped down as Acting GSL of 15th Sevenoaks (Otford) Group.

A Powerpoint slide was shown detailing the 'Virtual Xmas Quiz' being hosted by Kelly Williams and scheduled for Friday, 11th December with link information for those wishing to support.

14. Close

With no other items of business appropriate to the AGM received Anthony Hitchings thanked everyone for attending the zoom meeting which filled 2 screens before closing the business part of the AGM at 20:49 hours (8.49pm).

- Provision of 'Scoutadelic' link for Oggy, the Rainbow/Hedgehog mascot, taking a trail around Great Gilwell by Kevin McDonnell (<https://play.scoutadelic.com>)

ATTENDEES:

Michael Dreksler and Jo Brookbank (District Commissioners).

Anthony Hitchings (District Chair).

Samantha Devenney (District Treasurer).

Neil Gearing and Elaine Greenwood (Kent County Scouts).

Vice-Chairman of Sevenoaks District Council, Cllr. Diana Esler with husband and consort Michael Pearsall.

Mayor of Sevenoaks Town, Nicholas Busvine.

Ali Miller (1st); Nick Roberts (1st); Kevin McDonald (1st); Malcolm Fisher (1st).

Bertie Downard (3rd).

P'nut (Stuart) Holden (6th); Caroline Copleston (6th).

Michael Schwarz (7th Chair); Jeanette Schwarz (7th).


Helen Davies (9th); Jennifer Trigg (9th); William Morrish (9th Chair).

Chris Barrow (12th).

Jan Pagett (15th).

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Russell Porter (17th).
 Jenny Baker-Hirst (DEC).
 Karen Willson (DESA).
 Claire Strickland.
 John Talbot (10th).
 Alan Copleston.
 Michael Randall (Explorer Commissioner).
 Duncan Harper (Explorer Leader); Erik Barrow (Explorer Leader); Rob Francis (Explorer Leader).
 Katie McCreadie (Network Commissioner).
 Nigel Rainey (LTM).
 Tom McKeen (DYC).
 Scott Henderson.
 Paul Tiblett (12th).
 Kaa.
 Brigitte Lincoln (12th).
 Robert Francis (Beaufighters)
 John Baker (3rd)
 Shelly Williams (4th)
 Michael Laver Smith (10th)



AGM attendees list

Anthony Hitchings	Stuart Holden	Kevin McDonnell	Sam devenney
Jo Brookbank	Elaine Greenwood	Michael Randall	Katie McCreadie
Michael Schwarz	Claire Strickland	Michael Laver Smith	Nick Busvine
Jeanette Schwarz	Paul Tibbert	Karen Wilson	Russell Porter
Erik Barrow	Jennifer Trigg	Robert Downard	Tom McKeen
Michael Dreksler	Helen Davies	Brigitte Lincoln	Jan Padgett
Samantha Devenney	Nick Roberts	Chris Barrow	All Miller
Neil Gearing	Michael Randall	Alan Copleston	Jenny and John
Scott Henderson	Shelly Williams	William morrish	Robert Francis
John Baker	Jenni Baker-Hirst	P'nut Holden	
Cllr Esler	John Talbot	Caroline Copleston	Dunan Harper