

### **Purpose**

The Group Executive Committee (GEC) exists to support the Group Scout Leader in meeting the responsibilities of their appointment and plays a vital role in the running of the Scout Group by controlling the finances, managing the risks, making decisions and carrying out the administrative tasks that ensure the best quality Scouting can be delivered to the young people in the 89th Reading Scout Group.

All members of the GEC are Trustees and those responsibilities have been emphasised with the help of the trustee support and resources provided by the County. The GEC continues to monitor and review risks. These include not just the building, grounds and activities, their usage and safety but also the financial and other external risks to the Group. This past year the GEC has reviewed all of our insurances, the Land Registry records for our site and the new Data Protection requirements of GDPR.

### **Updates**

The review of our insurances looked at both our cover and the premiums we pay. With the help of the Scout Association insurance broker 'Unity' we managed to increase our cover and reduce our premiums.

We own the freehold of our site and this is not in any doubt but not all of our land is registered with the Land Registry. There have been changes and additions to our site over the years that are registered but the original area that the hut is built on is not as the land was acquired prior to the Land Registry being created. We thought a solicitor had sorted this out a number of years ago but on closer inspection this has proved not to be the case and we are now looking in to how we can complete and consolidate the registration of all of our land with the Land Registry.

GDPR provided many challenges to an organisation such as ours but with the help, support and tools provided by the Scout Association the Group and all Sections are working to ensure that we are compliant with the new rules.

We have had a major sort out of our stores this year. John Potter has taken over as Quartermaster and with his Branching Up team have been checking and repairing all of our equipment. John is building a new inventory and has introduced a booking system to ensure that all the Sections receive all the kit they require, when they need it, and all in good working order.

The Christmas Post continues to raise funds for the Group and provide a great community service. Despite a national drop in the sending of physical Christmas cards we still sorted and delivered 2,460 cards and raised £750 for the 89th Scout Group at Christmas 2018.

### **Finances**

In 2017-18 we reported a drop of £7,000 in our cash balance. This was largely due to repayment of loans on the new building, a slight drop in Scout numbers, and a reduction in hall rentals and activity centre bookings. The GEC, with the help of our new Treasurer Alan Skeats, reviewed all possible cost reductions and ways to increase income streams to maintain the services provided for the children.

Under Alan's guidance we produced a budget and ensured items are recorded in a way that makes it easier to monitor our outgoings on a monthly basis and compare our outgoings against previous years. I am pleased to report that as of 31<sup>st</sup> March 2019 we increased our cash balance slightly by £1,000 to £18,000 after the payment of all of our liabilities for 2018-19.

Unfortunately, Alan's retirement did not last long, he is back working for his previous employer and has a number of personal issues to deal with during the year which have taken up all of his free time. As a result he is standing down as Treasurer and is a bit behind with the production of the annual accounts but these will be presented to the next GEC meeting.

### **Subs 2019 -2020**

Last year we decided not to increase our annual Subs whilst the budget review process was ongoing. Whilst we have increased our cash balance this is a result of cost savings and increased hall and activity centre bookings. The budget review showed that on average our Scouting activities are showing a loss of £12 a year per Scout. As a result the GEC has decided to increase the monthly subscription to £12 from £11 with effect from 1<sup>st</sup> September 2019. We believe that £120 a year is still fantastic value for the fun, enjoyment and life skills the children and young people get out of their Scouting at the 89<sup>th</sup>.

### **Branching Up**

When we opened the new 89<sup>th</sup> HQ and Activity Centre in April 2014 it was with the realisation that such a massive fundraising effort is a once in a generation opportunity and one of the key responsibilities of the GEC is the effective stewardship of the building, grounds and activity equipment. The building and grounds are cleaned and maintained by Branching Up who provide work experience for adults with learning disabilities. This currently gives 8 adults the opportunity to learn new skills and experience work-related tasks in a rewarding community environment. They are doing a wonderful job for us and whilst much of what they do passes unnoticed the fact that even with daily use the building and grounds look as great today as when we opened 5 years ago is testament to how good they are at what they do.

### **Help Required**

There are a number of ways to get involved with the Group but in particular we would like to appoint a number of administrators to help the Sections with their admin such as the register and subs collection. It will only take 20 minutes or so once or twice a month and the tasks can easily be performed when you drop your kids off on their Section night. This is a great way to volunteer to help the Group without making any additional time commitment.

### **Goodbyes and Hellos**

I would like to thank all members of the GEC for the work they have put in this past year but in particular I would like to thank Anne Mace who is standing down as Group Secretary after over 10 years' service and Alan Skeats for the processes he established this past year that have put us on such a sound footing financially. At the same time we say hello to Jane Armitage who is taking over as Group Secretary and Fiona Barker our new Group Administrator responsible for DBS checks as well as welcoming back Roy Gordon to the Group as Treasurer.

*Robin Kent*

*Group Chair*

*89<sup>th</sup> Reading (Milestone Wood) Scout Group*