

**DRAFT MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE COUNCIL OF THE  
SCOUT ASSOCIATION HELD ON SATURDAY 2 SEPTEMBER 2023  
AT GILWELL PARK, CHINGFORD, E4 7QW**

**Present:** Carl Hankinson – UK Chief Commissioner and TSA Trustee  
Mike Ashley – TSA Treasurer and Trustee  
Matt Hyde – Chief Executive and TSA Trustee  
Ayesha Karim – UK Youth Commissioner and TSA Trustee  
Jennie Price – Chair of the Board of Trustees  
Members of the Council (including those listed above) – 131 in attendance  
Guests and Observers (inc. staff) – 55 in attendance

**1. Welcome and Introductions**

Rhian Moore, Wales Chief Volunteer, and Callum Kaye, International Commissioner, welcomed everyone to the meeting. They provided a succinct summary of the year in numbers, noting that 4,500 Scouts and volunteers attended the World Scout Jamboree (WSJ) in Korea; 4600 Scouts went on a visit abroad; 7.2 million in The Big Help Out; The Scout Association (TSA) now has over 1000 Squirrel Dreys and over 200 Squirrels had their first night away this year. It was further noted that Gill Clay, the granddaughter of TSA's founder Lord Baden-Powell, had completed a charity Wing Walk.

The Wales Chief Volunteer and the International Commissioner offered a brief overview of the meeting agenda, noting that the Leadership Team would take attendees through a review of the year, following this would be the formal AGM. A Q&A session was also scheduled for after lunch.

Joint Presidents, the Duke of Kent and the Princess of Wales, very much regretted that they could not be present. As our Chief Scout was unable to be with us, the Board of Trustees therefore proposed that the Chair of our Board, Jennie Price, should also be Chair of the AGM. Council members were asked to indicate their support of the proposal by voting. This proposal was **APPROVED**.

The Wales Chief Volunteer and the International Commissioner introduced the Association's Chair Jennie Price.

Mrs Price thanked the Wales Chief Volunteer and International Commissioner. She welcomed everyone to the AGM, extending a particular welcome to Andy Chapman, Chair of the World Scout Committee. Mrs Price expressed the Association's sadness at the death of Her Late Majesty the Queen, who was TSA's Patron and also the deaths of the Association's Vice President, Lord Airrie, and the Lord Michael Baden-Powell, earlier in the summer; noting that they are deeply missed. She further articulated TSA's huge pride in seeing its young volunteers support the crowd's queueing to pay their respects at the lying-in-state of Her Late Majesty; noting that it was a reminder of how Scouts use their skills to help other people.

The significant challenges of the World Scout Jamboree (WSJ) were noted, and attendees were informed that the Board had agreed to undertake a review which will report in 2024. Mrs Price put on record her personal, and huge thanks and admiration for the entire volunteer and staff leadership team. It was noted that they had to make the biggest decision in the

toughest of circumstances and succeeded in putting young people's safety first and coming up with a brilliant 'Jamboree in Seoul' programme from scratch. It was acknowledged that there would be many lessons to learn from the Association's experiences in Seoul, however the response from the volunteer and staff leadership team, and the Association's young people's resilience was outstanding and a source of pride.

Mrs Price invited Carl Hankinson, UK Chief Commissioner, Matt Hyde, Chief Executive, and Ayesha Karim, UK Youth Commissioner to begin the review of the year. (A video was played to remind council members a little of what we've achieved together).

## **2. Review of the Year**

The Chief Executive thanked Mrs Price and noted that the video just played would be available on the Scouts Brand Centre to be played at Annual General Meetings across the UK. Mr Hyde expressed that this was a year of achievement, sometimes against all the odds. Amongst the Association's key achievements, it was noted that membership had continued to grow, the Scouts served the nation at the Lying-in-State, the Coronation at the Big Help Out and the Association has kept its promise to make volunteering easier and more rewarding. It was further noted that TSA was named Charity of the Year in the Charity Times Awards, earned the Queen Elizabeth II Platinum Jubilee Volunteering Award, and many of the organisation's local volunteers were named as Coronation Champions. TSA has been shortlisted in a further eight awards this year, including Volunteer Team of the Year for its incredible Scouts who supported the Lying-in-State. Mr Hyde expressed that all of this was a testament to the incredible talent and energy of TSA's people and teams.

The UK Chief Commissioner, Mr Hankinson, thanked Mr Hyde. He noted the challenges encountered at the WSJ in South Korea, and expressed his pride at the way TSA's young people and volunteers represented the organisation. Noting that they acted in line with the Scout values with positivity, practicality and dignity in a hugely challenging environment. He thanked Liz Walker and her team for all their work towards achieving this. The events organised and delivered within the UK were also noted, with Mr Hankinson recognising the vital role local nights away play in Scouting; noting that the focus is always to help young people gain skills for life and make volunteering easier to help the organisation achieve this. Mr Hankinson thanked everyone for the support they had provided the movement with.

Ms Karim, UK Youth Commissioner, explained that the theme for the year was 'inclusive growth', noting that this had been key to the organisation's success. She emphasised the importance of where the organisation grows, the communities it is partnering with and how it is succeeding in diversifying the movement. It was noted that this was a key theme at Basecamp in May 2022 and will continue to be a key theme as the organisation is committed to equity, diversity and inclusion.

Mr Hyde agreed that inclusive growth lies at the heart of TSA's strategy, reminding attendees that the organisation will be delivering this strategy up to 2025 with all key programmes proceeding as planned. The organisation will soon start planning for the next strategic cycle, looking at the changing landscape and no doubt taking forward many of the key themes. Mr Hyde introduced Liz Henderson, Chief Commissioner of England, to further elaborate on how the association is growing as a movement.

## **Growth**

The Chief Commissioner of England thanked Mr Hyde. She explained that there was much good news to report; the organisation had seen a 5.6% increase in its young people, taking TSA to over 436,015 members aged 4-18. Some of this was powered by the rapid expansion in the Squirrels population, which had grown by 216%. However, Explorer numbers had also risen by a healthy 7.4%. It was noted that the Association is committed to supporting young people at every stage of their development; and that this growth is possible because the organisation is continuing to attract new adult volunteers. It was noted that numbers were up by 3000 this year, with frontline leaders up by 4.5%. The Chief Commissioner of England explained the organisation's great need for volunteers as there were currently 100,000 young people on TSA's waiting lists. This is an all-time high figure and underlines the acute need to open more sections. New funding will help towards achieving this for Scouts and Explorers, however ultimately it is recruiting more adults that will allow the organisation to welcome these young people.

Hence, there is now a relentless focus on inclusive growth, starting Scouting in areas the organisation has not been into before, adapting to meet the needs of communities, building trust and being open to different ways of doing this. It was noted that there were already great examples of this, such as the Attracting Young Muslims to Scouting Project supported by the Pears Foundation and the Aziz Foundation. This learning will be taken to support growth in other areas.

It was explained that a £440,000 grant from DCMS allowed the Growth and Communities Team to open 30 new sections in the government's levelling up areas, creating 600 places. Further to this, a £2.5 million investment from the TSA's reserves will support growth in underrepresented areas and communities across all four nations. An additional grant of £6 million from the Department of Culture Media and Sport's Uniformed Youth Fund will help fund Local Growth Officers to support volunteers to open new Troops and Units for young people aged 10 and over. All this will help to tackle the waiting lists.

Although one in four of our youth members moved away from Scouts during the pandemic, we saw record single year youth membership growth of 16%, 60,000 more young people. While our biggest growth was among Beaver Scouts, it wasn't as strong in the older sections, and we need to work to replicate that success right across our age ranges. She noted that while we opened nearly 400 new sections last year, our waiting list has grown to 90,000 young people. 4,000 new front-line volunteers have joined us, which is certainly helping, but we saw an overall drop of 2% as volunteer manager and supporter roles reduced.

Mr Hyde thanked the Chief Commissioner of England, and further extended his thanks to the teams that helped attract this income as well as those now delivering the work. Mr Hyde introduced Tom Milson, UK Commissioner for Inclusion, to provide an update on inclusivity.

## **Inclusion**

The UK Commissioner for Inclusion iterated that this year, more than any other, the focus has been on inclusion. However, he noted that diversifying the movement is not the work of a

year, hence the journey will continue until every young person receives the opportunities they need.

The UK Commissioner for Inclusion explained that that many steps forward were made this year. The Growth and Communities team had now helped open 434 more sections in the bottom 30% of Areas of Multiple Deprivation since 2016 – which was 66 off the organisation's target of 500 for 2025.

Just as encouragingly, nearly half of Squirrels volunteers are new to Scouts, many from communities the organisation has not reached before. Similarly, the decision to focus on opening Squirrels Dreys in low-income neighbourhoods had also led to greater inclusion. 25% of the first 1,000 Dreys are in TSA's 30% most deprived areas with 34% of them having 10% or more young people from Black, Asian and minority ethnic backgrounds.

It was noted that TSA is also making significant progress in Race Equity, with a board having been established and a vision and roadmap published. We were now in the implementation stage. A co-creation group made up of volunteers from Black, Asian and minority ethnic backgrounds is helping welcome volunteers from all backgrounds to Scouts. Inclusion is being more deeply built into the organisations learning experience, with specific learning available on Equity, Diversity and Inclusion for all our volunteers.

While taking all this forward, TSA is keen to learn more about how it can adapt and meet the needs of underrepresented communities in Scouts especially the Black British Community. New research projects and learning from the successful experience of the Muslim Scout Fellowship, means TSA can use these insights to better welcome young people and volunteers from more diverse backgrounds.

The UK Chief Commissioner for Inclusion handed over to the UK Youth Commissioner to share news on Youth Shaped Scouting.

### **Youth Shaped**

The UK Youth Commissioner noted that this had been her first year in post, and she was impressed by the organisation's young people. Noting that their willingness to take the lead and shape their experience at every age was clear. She iterated her pride that 165,000 YouShape Awards have been earned across the UK. Reminding attendees that this was designed by Youth Commissioners themselves. It was noted that young people were also better represented in leadership positions. TSA now have 540 Youth Commissioners across the UK (up from 460 in 2018). As well as 40 young people in National Role Pool, who are stepping up into key roles at the most senior level.

The UK Youth Commissioner explained that the 15% rise in Young Leaders is cause for celebration. Noting that it tells us that this generation is passionate about volunteering and unafraid to take the lead.

She informed attendees that the focus was now on ensuring there are opportunities for young people to shape their Scouting in Squirrels as well as in other sections, and make sure at least 50% of all young people are shaping their experience by 2025.

The UK Youth Commissioner handed over to CJ Ledger, Deputy UK Chief Commissioner, to provide an overview of TSA's community impact.

## **Community Impact**

The Deputy UK Chief Commissioner explained that helping other people has always been in TSA's Promise and noted that there had been some hugely powerful reminders of that this year. The volunteers who served at the lying-in-state of Her Late Majesty Queen Elizabeth II showed the public how Scouts step up to do their duty in times of crisis. The work TSA's young volunteers did with the Felix project, redistributing food and blankets from the queue, was also noted. As well as the great effort at the King's Coronation, where Scouts directed the crowds.

Alongside these state events we have been continuing to support the movement with the Million Hands Community Impact programme. The Million Hands webpage has been viewed over 20,000 times. There had been a 181% increase in sales of the Community Impact badge.

It was noted that Scouts contributed an astonishing quarter of a million acts of Kindness for the Queen. Squirrels earned 6,500 Local Superhero badges between them in 2022.

## **Values**

The UK Chief Commissioner thanked the Deputy UK Chief Commissioner and commented that it had been an incredible year of community impact. He handed over to the Deputy UK Chief Commissioner, Craig Turpie, to talk about TSA's values.

Mr Turpie explained that the organisation is defined by Scout values. They are the foundation of the organisation and are used to guide decision making and inform how we act towards each other each week in Scouts, with Integrity, Respect, Care, Belief and Cooperation. However, these are just words until they have put them into action. Role modelling behaviour – showing kindness and consideration towards each other, listening and supporting, whether that's face to face or across social media, is the measure of who we are as Scouts.

Mr Turpie noted that we can only truly call ourselves Scouts when these values are followed. He expressed that he was pleased the organisation launched its new Volunteering Culture this year, noting that it was the bedrock of everything TSA does.

Mr Turpie handed over to Lewis Dangerfield, UK Commissioner for Programme, for a programme update.

## **Programme**

The UK Commissioner for Programme informed attendees that there were now 1,600 ready-made activities on the online Activities Finder; 150 of which were added in the past this year. The activities are well used; there had been 1.25 million visits to these pages, and 80% of users rated the activities either 4 or 5 stars. Improvement was also made to digital planning tools, new functionality was added, and new video content was created to bring the programmes to life.

TSA continues to be one of the leading deliverers of the Duke of Edinburgh Award. Over 6,500 of Scouts started the award this year and well over half completed it. The organisation also continues to promote its own top awards strongly; it was noted that nearly 40% of 4-13 years olds had completed their top awards. However, there was still some way to go on this, there is a need to promote the awards more strongly in older age ranges.

TSA's partners continue to play a vital role in supporting its programme. This year, a huge range of partners from Disney to Rolls Royce and Nominet have brought their expertise to help TSA develop some excellent new resources. It was noted that almost 110,000 young people earned their HSBC Money Skills Badges, while a partnership with Inmarsat helped promote STEM skills – with two lucky Scouts heading to Cape Canaveral to watch a satellite launch.

Looking forward, TSA needs to continue to increase uptake of its programme resources, thinking about how this can be made as easy as possible for volunteers. Top awards will also be promoted more strongly to Scouts, Explorers and Network. More nights away will also be encouraged, which remain one of the most enjoyable and valuable part of young people's experience in Scouts.

The UK Chief Commissioner handed over to Jack Caine, UK Commissioner for People, to share news on TSA's People pillar.

## **People**

The UK Commissioner for People highlighted none of what the organisation does is possible without volunteers. Hence attracting new volunteers while improving the volunteering experience for everyone will continue to be prioritised.

To make this a reality, efforts will be made to ensure there's a warmer welcome for new volunteers. As too often volunteers are put off by red tape, the wrong tone or confusing information.

Efforts will also be made to ensure that every week, volunteering for Scouts feels positive and rewarding. A better, more flexible learning experience is also being designed. In the background, work is being done with digital partners to create the new learning and membership systems TSA needs. Improving TSA's volunteer experience was a key focus of Basecamp 22. Progress has been rapid since then. The counties have now recruited their Transformation Leads and teams to make local plans to roll out the new volunteer experience.

It was noted that TSA was pleased to continue collaborating with Girlguiding on better recruitment tools and a better approach to welcoming volunteers, funded by the Pears Foundation.

Strong values and culture underpin TSA's whole volunteer experience. Hence, the organisation was pleased to launch its new Volunteering Culture statement earlier this year.

TSA's award-winning Digital Skills tool is now supporting volunteers in a rapidly changing technological environment.

The UK Commissioner for People explained that work on rolling out the volunteering experience continues – with early adopters starting in November, with the changes and new tools going wider to everyone in early 2024.

The UK Commissioner for People handed over to the UK Commissioner for Perception, Nisha Patel, to share news on TSA's Perception work.

## **Perception**

The UK Commissioner for Perception explained that getting Scouts seen in a positive light is vital to many things, including attracting new volunteers. When Scouts are seen to be playing their part and using their skills to help others, public trust in TSA rises. This is why big moments such as the Scouts supporting the Lying-in-State, the Coronation and the Big Help Out are significant to the movement; they shift the dial and change minds about Scouts.

Public perception of Scouts is tracked each year and positively, trust in TSA and the perception of the organisation as relevant and open to all has risen. In addition, over 80% of the public believe that TSA gives young people skills useful in later life. This was also underlined by the Demos report published this year, which highlighted how extra-curricular activities like Scouts help young people gain the skills they need for life and work – especially in this age of AI. Young people who were in Scouts are gaining the life skills employers most value, with more than half saying the teamwork and leadership skills they learned in Scouts have helped in their careers.

Over the last year, TSA had over 23,000 pieces of media coverage. The Scouts' work supporting the lying-in-state alone was covered in 55 broadcast pieces and every UK adult had 87 opportunities to view. This had a positive impact. During the coverage, enquiries rose sharply. It was noted that TSA had been shortlisted for PR Team of the Year and Communications Team of the Year.

The UK Commissioner for Perception acknowledged the key role TSA's ambassador team and Chief Scout play in public perception, from publicly launching the Big Help Out and meeting Scouts at Windsor to supporting recruitment and saying thank you to volunteers, they help to ensure the organisation is seen and heard when it matters.

It was noted that TSA's social media has also continued to inspire and support members, parents and volunteers. The PR team and Communication team have particularly worked hard to share stories from underrepresented communities; celebrating important days from every faith while signposting new resources and events to make it easier to deliver a great programme for young people.

The organisations public affairs work was noted as being impressive; as well as launching the Demos report, the team successfully lobbied for relief for charities on their energy bills

during the cost-of-living crisis. The team's excellent links with DCMS supported TSA's grant fund applications, and the PR and Communications teams continued to draw attention to the great work Scouts does across the UK.

The UK Commissioner for Perception invited Andy Chapman, Chairperson of the World Scout Committee to say a few words.

Andy Chapman spoke about the work of WOSM and in particular his experiences and reflections on the recent World Scout Jamboree.

The UK Commissioner for Perception thanked Mr Chapman for coming to speak to Council members today and invited Explorer Scout Sasha to share her World Scout Jamboree story.

Mr Hyde thanked Sasha and Mr Chapman. He noted it was impressive to hear stories about people's experiences of the WSJ, highlighting the resilience and spirit young people and volunteers showed throughout. Mr Hyde noted that his own experience at the WSJ was that despite all the stress and challenges, the overall event was extraordinary to be part of. Young people were kept safe, and although this came at a cost it was the right thing to do. Volunteers and staff ultimately managed to create an engaging programme for TSA's young people, from trips to football matches and museums, cultural events to trekking across the city. Mr Hyde noted that this was possible due to the creativity and hard work of TSA's team on the ground, as well as generous support from the Mayor of Seoul, the British Embassy and others.

The importance of measuring the impact of Scouts more widely on young people week in week out here in the UK was also noted. This is vital in making TSA's case to funders and decision-makers as well as measuring the organisation's impact rather than merely relying on anecdotal evidence.

In the last Scouts Experience survey 94% of young people aged 13-17 reported they developed skills useful to them in the future because of Scouting. Meanwhile 88% said they'd tried activities in Scouting they'd never tried before. There was also evidence of an improvement in young people's wellbeing, resilience and active citizenship since the pandemic. TSA's young people report being happier (up 6% on the previous year), increasingly likely to play an active part in their community (up 4%) with perseverance and grit up by 5%. These are encouraging signs and reminder of the vital importance of what TSA does for young people now and for future life chances.

We have robust safeguarding training and processes in place. You'll know that every one of our 143,000 volunteers must undergo safeguarding training when they take up a role with Scouts and must refresh their training every three years. Our safeguarding training and processes are now externally reviewed every two years.

Our processes were independently assessed by NSPCC earlier this year, and we are implementing their recommendations for improving the training that will roll out as part of volunteer experience.

Mr Hankinson explained that the Safeguarding team had been significantly expanded in order to ensure the organisation responds to safeguarding concerns in a robust manner. The Yellow Card remains at the heart of TSA's safeguarding approach. Noting that volunteers also hold responsibility to carry the card and adhere to it. Mr Hankinson informed Council members that the Yellow Card had recently undergone updates which would be shared soon.

Mr Hyde noted that the Safety team had also expanded this year, noting that TSA continually sought ways to develop and embed its safety culture. Most significantly, TSA has relentlessly prioritised core safety training for all members and line managers. Compliance is now 96%, which is very good compared with the rest of the sector. However, it needs to be 100%, hence the focus on compliance will continue.

The organisation also developed a 3-year road map and launched a local support pilot to check the quality of its safety support and learn more about how risk is being managed on the ground.

It was noted that there will be a renewed focus on safety training and education. TSA will continue to develop the safety assurance framework and work closely with National Governing Bodies and other partnership organisations to bring specialist external advice and scrutiny.

Mr Hankinson introduced a film celebrating one of TSA's milestones this year: reaching 1,000 Squirrels Dreys.

### **3. Welcome and Apologies**

Mr Hyde thanked everyone that had spoken, and reminded attendees that at the start of the meeting Council members indicated their support for the proposal that Jennie Price chairs this meeting in place of TSA's Joint Presidents, The Duke of Kent, and The Princess of Wales. Mr Hyde handed over to the Chair, Jennie Price.

Mrs Price reminded Council members that they were required to participate in the meeting by voting at various points. Explaining that when an item requiring a vote is presented, members will be asked to raise their red card.

Council members were asked to note that apologies had been received from 28 Council members.

### **4. Minutes of the AGM held on 3 September 2022**

It was noted that Council members had received by email the Minutes of last year's AGM which was held in person on 3 September 2022 at Gilwell Park. Members were asked to approve the Minutes by raising their red card.

The minutes of the AGM held on 3 September 2022 were **APPROVED**.

### **5. Annual Report and Accounts 2022/23**

The Chair reported that in accordance with the Bye Laws the Annual Report and Accounts had been formally approved and adopted by the Trustees, signed off by the Chair of the Board on 26 July 2023. The Annual report was not required to be formally adopted by the Council, however, must be **presented** to the Council and Council Members are entitled to ask any questions on its content.

Mrs Price invited Mike Ashley, the Association's Treasurer to present the Annual Report and Accounts for the year ended 31 March 2023.

Mr Ashley delivered a presentation on the Association's Annual Report and Accounts for the year ended 31 March 2023. Noting that Mrs Price, Mr Hyde and Mr Hankinson had already spoken on TSA's progress over the last year, he explained that these points were covered in detail in the first 32 pages of the Annual Report.

For the presentation, Mr Ashley would focus on the key financial aspects and how they have been reflected in TSA's accounts. It was noted that this was largely covered in the Our Finances section of the Annual Report starting on page 33. Mr Ashley explained that he would highlight and provide some colour on the key messages in the report. As well as provide an update on key developments in the current year. He noted that he would cover the balance sheet position, and specifically reserves, income and expenditure.

### **Balance Sheet Position**

TSA's balance sheet position continued to be both strong and extremely liquid with the organisations long term reserves largely invested through its two portfolio managers, Cazenove and Sarasin and the funds anticipated to be utilised over the next few years held in short term bank deposits, which currently had a reasonable return, although less than the rate of inflation.

### **Reserve**

Overall reserves declined during the year by approximately £1.7 million to around £86.7 million as at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2023. This balance comprised just under £50 million in general funds, nearly £28 million in designated funds (largely representing the net book value of TSA's tangible fixed assets including heritage assets), £6 million in restricted and endowment funds and £900,000 in TSA's trading subsidiaries – primarily Scout Stores. In addition, the organisation now had a surplus (in accounting terms) on the defined benefit pension fund which stood at £2 million.

Most of the movements in reserves were attributable to items other than the net expenditure of the year which was only about £700,000. The general funds declined overall by around £7.5 million. In addition to the net expenditure there were declines in the market value of TSA's long-term investments of £1.3 million which should hopefully recover over the next few years as economies stabilise. The balance of the £7.5m largely comprised investments in TSA's fixed assets (primarily in Scout Adventures and IT software) which exceeded depreciation by about £2 million and injections into the pension fund of £3.6 million, comprising both the residual payments due under the previous deficit recovery plan and an additional injection of £2.5 million. The restricted and endowment funds remained

overall essentially the same as the previous year. The previous pension fund deficit reversed to be a surplus due to the funds injected noted above – overall movements due to changes in actuarial assumptions being negligible. There was continued consideration around what steps might be taken to further de-risk the fund and reduce volatility from TSA's perspective.

The Trading subsidiaries balance increased by about £500,000 which was attributable to taxable profits being that much less than accounting profits due to up front allowances received on capital expenditure. This restricted the amount paid under the deeds of covenant to maintain optimal tax efficiency; however, it was anticipated that this would reverse in future years.

The reserves policy for TSA had been maintained to a target of one year's worth of expenditure reflecting a level which allows TSA to better withstand future events which might temporarily curtail or significantly restrict scouting activities for a reasonable period. In addition, the team was looking to maintain a level of reserves within TSA to provide some medium-term cover for possible claims after considering TSA's commercial insurance cover. This indicated a current overall target of about £29 million - slightly increased from last year due to inflation.

As noted in the Annual Report, whilst the current level of free reserves continued to be well in excess of this target there were a number of factors that would significantly reduce them over the next few years – including in particular the continuing need to rebuild membership numbers after the pandemic. In this context around £8 million was earmarked for a specific Skills For Life fund to help deliver the strategy including investing in local Scouting to support membership growth especially in areas of deprivation. This will be alongside the £6 million Government funding that was secured for inclusive growth.

In addition, further investments are required specifically in Safety and Safeguarding and IT (particularly digital) capabilities. These have led to the team budgeting for a core operating loss again this year and next, of, in aggregate, about £6 million. Further investments in commercial activities such as Scout Stores and Scout Adventures will also be considered.

The financial impact of the WSJ was noted. Prior to incurring the costs of the decision to both delay the contingent's move to the site and the early withdrawal therefrom, the UK participation in the Jamboree was roughly at break even. Additional costs were incurred to ensure the safety of the UK contingent. These costs amounted to about £2.75 million. TSA is actively pursuing reimbursement from other parties and reviewing the insurance position carefully. It was noted that the organisation's reserves are adequate to absorb any net loss.

Recovery from the Pandemic was ongoing. Membership income recovered to £13.2 million in 2022/23 from £11.2 million in 2021/22 on the back of increased membership numbers – the core membership fee was held flat.

This year income from Unity had been reclassified as a trading rather than a charitable activity, as this feels more reflective of its underlying nature. After adjusting for this the

trading income overall increased by nearly 14% to £14 million of which Scout Stores was £10.5 million and Unity was nearly £2.6 million – both of these were increases on last year. The balance of about £960,000 was attributable to sponsorship, promotions and royalties and TSA's highest value partnership, with Go Outdoors, who sponsor several of the key programme badges, had been renewed.

It was noted that the sale of Downe Adventure centre had been agreed with a buyer who specialises in Youth outdoor provision. Conveyancing was underway with sale completion estimated for the end of September. The buyers were keen to encourage ongoing Scout usage of the site once they have refurbished the buildings post sale.

As regards income from charitable activities, Scout Adventures continued to slowly recover from the pandemic and its income from the activity centres was £2.4 million – down over £1.9 million on pre-pandemic levels. TSA's sites offer great opportunities for outdoor activities and overnight residential for both Scouts and Schools. There was a marked increase in usage in the current year – up to 93% of pre-pandemic levels this summer and the year to date financial performance was on budget.

It was noted that Scout's night's away activity on TSA sites had seen strong recovery this year as had the key School market, with a good level of repeat bookings for next year. However, it was noted that there was a need to more actively market the sites to increase their utilisation. Targeted investment was being used in the sites, designed to improve the attractiveness as well as ensure they are self-sustaining going forward.

Investment income grew significantly this year as the proceeds from the sale of Baden Powell House was invested both in TSA's longer term investment portfolio as well as short term bank deposits which were now earning a reasonable rate of interest.

Mr Ashley thanked everyone who had contributed to TSA's fundraising. Noting that although other voluntary income declined by about £500,000 on 2021/22, the organisation received a single legacy of nearly £1 million for the benefit of a specified Count. Grants for specific projects, which therefore are accounted for as restricted income, increased by about £260,000 principally due to government funding from the Kickstarter scheme and from DCMS Uniformed Youth Fund. A significant further donation was also received from Mike Kessler to the project to create a new Welcome Centre at Gilwell and that has been added to by others, including some of TSA's Gilwell Fellows, over the year.

### **Expenditure Split**

Expenditure increased by nearly £7 million from just over £30 million to £37 million. The largest single element of this was due to staff costs which increased by £4.6 million or 34% reflecting a 29% increase in full time equivalent staff numbers together with increases in salary levels in response to an inflationary environment, both for existing staff and to attract new staff. The increase in average FTE staff numbers was only slightly ahead of pre-pandemic levels and in addition to the increase of 20 in Activity Centre staff (noted in the accounts), there were increases in IT and digital capability, support for the development of

the volunteer experience programme and in safety and safeguarding personnel to meet increased activity levels.

This contributed primarily to the increase in the direct cost of charitable activities as whilst the cost of trading activities also rose by 15% this was in large part attributable to the increase in the goods sold by Scout Stores. In addition, through maintaining good cost control generally, support costs overall declined slightly from £9.2 million to £9 million. Grant funding to the movement declined slightly from about £1 million to just over £900,000 which reflected the reduced disbursements from the Hardship Fund (which has now effectively all been spent) as well as the absence of any equivalent to Race Round the World this year.

Mr Ashley provided an overview of the direct costs of TSA's charitable activities across four areas: Support and Services to the members, Adult Support and Training, Development of Scouting and Youth Programme and Activities. The overall direct costs increased from about £12.2 million to £17.9 million. The overall increase was about 47%, the increase was concentrated in two of the four areas, namely Development of Scouting by 107% and Adult support and training by 92% while the Youth Programme increased by about 49%, and Support and services to members by 11%.

It was noted that this generally reflected the different stages of recovery post pandemic with the central two areas requiring the greater effort as face to face scouting grew – specifically on the growth and community teams and Scout Adventures.

Looking to the future it was noted that:

- TSA continues to have a strong position both in terms of reserves and cash and the intention is to maintain this level of resilience. This would be achieved by continuing to invest the reserves in a diversified portfolio intended to maintain its value over the long term as well as generate income to assist in TSA's growth programmes.
- A decision had been made to increase the core membership subscription for 2024/25 by £2 to £38 (£37.50 after the 50p discount for prompt payment) and continue to use the reserves to absorb the anticipated operating loss whilst membership numbers recover, and activities return to more normal levels. It was noted that this increase anticipated the need for greater resources particularly in the areas of Safety and Safeguarding and IT and digital. However, despite this, the increase remains below the prevailing rate of inflation as was the increase for the current year.
- The team is looking to invest funds in TSA's commercial operations as it is anticipated this would provide a good return as well as benefit the movement more generally. The team was also looking to continue to invest in Scout Adventure Centres to bring them up to and maintain them at an appropriate standard for the future.
- It was noted that inflationary pressures will continue to rise over the next few years and without making other savings TSA will not be able to hold increases in membership

subscriptions below the prevailing rate of inflation indefinitely. Hence, the team will continue to review the ongoing operating model of TSA and the services it provides to the movement to ensure they remain relevant and provide value for money.

Mrs Price thanked Mr Ashley for the clarity of his presentation. She noted that Council members were asked to submit any questions on the Report and Accounts in advance. No questions had been received.

## **6. Elected Members of the Council**

Mrs Price invited the Council to approve the election of the proposed Elected Members by raising their red card. The Council **APPROVED** the election of the following Elected Members of the Council for a further period of three years:

Debra Morris  
Paul Weeks  
Ian Mackenzie  
Pam Kelly

## **7. Appointed Member of the Board of Trustees**

Mrs Price informed members that Mike Ashley was Appointed by the Council as a Trustee and Treasurer of The Scouts in 2020. It was noted that Mr Ashley's first term of office ends at this AGM. The Board of Trustees had recommended to Council, the extension of Mr Ashley's appointment for a further three year term to the 2026 AGM. Mr Ashley was asked to leave the meeting whilst Council voted to extend his appointment.

Council **APPROVED** the extension of Mike Ashley's appointment as Trustee and Treasurer of The Scouts, to the 2026 AGM.

## **8. Elected Members of the Board of Trustees**

Mrs Price noted that this year, we called for candidates from the electoral colleges of England North, England South and Northern Ireland. These elections resulted as follows:

### **a) England North Electoral College**

For England North, there was one candidate, Therefore the individual will be elected unopposed. The successful candidate was **Peter Oliver** who was elected for England North.

### **b) England South Electoral College**

For England South, there were four candidates and one vacancy. The successful candidate was **Liz Walker** who has been elected for England South.

### **c) Northern Ireland Electoral College**

For the Northern Ireland Electoral College there was one candidate, therefore the individual was elected unopposed. The successful candidate was **Paul Dickson** who has been elected for the Northern Ireland Electoral College.

All new Trustees were elected for the period 2023/2026, subject to them remaining a Member of the Association.

### **9. Elected Youth Member of the Board of Trustees**

The Chair advised Council that there were two vacancies and eight candidates for the role. Details of all candidates were sent to council members at the end of July and voting was held online. Mrs Price read only the name of the successful candidates, but noted again that details of the votes cast were available should any council member like to see them.

**Joseph Fletcher** and **Liam Edgely** were elected as the Members (18-24) for the period 2023-26, subject to them remaining a Member or Associate Member of the Association.

### **10. Byelaw Amendments, Trustee Election Project**

For this item, Mrs Price handed over to Gareth Jones, trustee and Vice-Chair of the Board who is one of the team who worked on this project.

Mr Jones explained that the aim of the project was to review the current UK trustee election process and in consultation with Council members propose changes to that process. The key aim was to introduce a process that ensures Council members are better informed and can be confident when voting in the elections that the candidates put forward will enhance the board's effectiveness. There was also an aim to widen the candidate pool and promote TSA's work towards Youth Shaped Scouting and Race Equity.

In 2021 Council Members were consulted and 86% of those who responded were in favour of updating the current process. Since then, the project team have engaged with Council Members at all levels, from regional meetings and Youth Commissioner meetings to Nations and UK Leadership Team. More recently they've held webinars for nominated members and youth members. This has given Council members the chance to input and shape the proposals, which were developed and refined based on the feedback received.

If approved, changes will take effect from next year's election. The process will be reviewed after the first year and regularly thereafter to ensure it's working well and is achieving expectations.

Mr Jones noted the following key points:

- Locally, we know that it is common place to have a conversation with prospective trustees before they are appointed at the AGM. The aim is to replicate that good practice.
- This will be achieved by introducing shortlisting's for Elections, not to reduce the number of applicants, but to ensure all candidates put forward are suitable. It might be that all candidates are put forward if they have the necessary skills and attributes.
- An introduction of a shortlisting panel and appeals panel made up of Council Members, who are elected by Council.

- Candidates for the Elected Trustee role (18-24) need to be 18 at the date of the AGM, rather than at nomination, enabling more young people to be national trustees.
- Candidates can be proposed by **any** adult member of Scouting but must be seconded by a TSA Council member. This makes it easier for potential candidates to find a proposer, enabling a wider pool of members to apply.
- Trustees are required to have a 2-year break after 2 terms of office

Mrs Price thanked Mr Jones and invited the Council to approve the Resolution to amend the Associations Byelaws. It was noted that the detailed amendments were circulated in the pre meeting documentation.

Council members **APPROVED** the resolution to amend the association's byelaws with 96% of council members present and voting, voting in favour of the changes.

**11. Any Other Business**

There being no other business, the Chair thanked Members of the Board of their commitment over the last 12 months, with special thanks to those Trustees completing their term of office – David Branagh, Ella, MacLeod and Gareth Jones.

Mrs Price thanked the Council for their attendance and formally closed the meeting. Council members were reminded to re-join for the Question and Answer session at 1pm, following lunch.

**Subat Bashir**  
**Governance Officer**

**Signed as a true and accurate record of the meeting**

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**Chair, The Scout Association**