

# Annual Report

## 2024



# County Lead Volunteer's Report

2024 has been a year defined by growth, resilience, and celebration across Nottinghamshire Scouts.

We saw fantastic census growth, fuelled by targeted district growth plans and a significant rise in Squirrel Dreys – giving even more young people the chance to start their Scouting journey.

The BIG Weekend made a triumphant return, uniting over 3,000 young people and volunteers in a celebration of Scouting. Plus, the NESST Challenge Hike brought hundreds together and highlighted the passion we have for the outdoors and teamwork in challenging weather conditions.

At the Hoveringham Activity Centre, our programme reached new heights with expanded offerings and major investment underway to secure its future, which is really exciting to see. We have been fortunate enough to have visits from our new Chief Scout, Dwayne Fields, and Scout Ambassador Tim Peake throughout the year, allowing us to showcase Nottinghamshire Scouts on the national stage.

We want to ensure that finance is not a barrier to young people participating in Scouting, so we launched a membership fee support scheme aimed at supporting those who benefit most from Scouts.

We've had some challenges too. The national transformation programme saw our volunteers embracing new digital tools, and whilst there were a good number of issues with the system, seeing everyone rallying together to support each other was truly inspiring and reflective of our community spirit we have in Scouts.

This year also brought change within our own teams. We formed a new county leadership team, and by working with key volunteers across the county, we developed a new strategy to keep Nottinghamshire moving forward.

We've given increased focus on supporting our volunteers, tightening up of our safety procedures by undertaking a rapid assurance process, and we've honoured achievement through our Oak Awards.

The future is bright, we've got significant investment going into the new activity centre building at Hoveringham, the Gang Show will make its return in a special 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary show, and we've got some extra special events up our sleeves that we can't wait to share with you!

We're going to continue to focus on rolling out the squirrel section across more groups, as we have seen amazing results from the dreys that have already opened. There's also going to be an increased focus on recognition of the great work our volunteers do and providing specialist support for our managers.

I'd like to pay an extra special thank you to Steven Tupper and his team for all of their hard work over the last six years, and we're committed to continuing this great work.

All these highlights have been made possible by the dedication of thousands of volunteers and young people across Nottinghamshire, and it never ceases to amaze me what we can achieve when we all work together. Never underestimate the massive positive impact you have on the lives of young people, it's truly remarkable.



**Jordan Phillips**  
County Lead Volunteer  
Nottinghamshire Scouts





# Key Achievements

Below are our key achievements in 2024, and you'll be able to find out lots more detail and achievements in the later pages of our annual report.

## Programme

- Top awards earned: 1,271 Chief Scouts Awards, 131 Duke of Edinburgh Awards, 14 Young Leader Belts & 3 King's Scout Awards
- Notts Scouts Adventure delivered 28,769 youth activity hours and 6,000 adult training hours and introduced new activities like Mega SUPs. It was the first-time use of Hoveringham Activity Centre at County Camp with 760 activity slots. Progress is being made on the new activity centre building, ensuring long-term adventure programme sustainability. We have 110 volunteers supporting the adventure programme.
- The BIG Weekend returned after six years since our last county camp. Over 3,000 participants took part. We relocated to Newark Showground after flooding, offering a full programme including new features like a driving school and silent disco. It involved 18 months of planning and widespread volunteer support.
- Nottingham Gang Show is preparing for its 75th anniversary in 2025. There's been a record audition turnout: 123 senior and 63 junior cast members, all supported by 70+ volunteers.

## Growth & Development

- Youth membership increased by 2.2%, exceeding national growth.
- Squirrel numbers rose by 50%, despite slight dips in Beaver and Cub sections.
- Young Leaders increased by 11%, strengthening youth leadership development.
- We introduced tailored district growth plans, with a continued focus on expansion of Squirrel Dreys.

## Volunteer Experience

- Launched new digital tools to modernise volunteering (new membership and learning platforms).
- Go-Live Support Team resolved hundreds of volunteer queries.

## Volunteering Development

- We delivered lots of training courses, particularly for First Response
- We awarded 108 wood badges to our volunteers to recognise the completion of the adult training scheme.
- Launched a county Scout Experience Survey for feedback and input into the new county plan.
- Planning to introduce learning opportunities in mental health, neurodiversity, and behaviour management.
- We recognised lots of our volunteers, with 179 Good Service Awards and 366 Length of Service Awards (totalling 5,920 years of service). Our County Awards Advisory Group have fostered a strong culture of appreciation.

## Perception

- We revitalised our county newsletter, making it more engaging and frequent with bitesize content.
- We welcomed our new Chief Scout, Dwayne Fields, to The BIG Weekend.
- Scout Ambassador Tim Peake's visit to Nottingham featured on our national social media pages.
- Forged partnerships with local organisations (e.g., Nottingham Panthers where over 600 discounted tickets have been sold).

# Programme

As we reflect on 2024, we're proud to share the progress, achievements, and learnings from another dynamic and purposeful year. Our collective aim has remained steadfast: to champion a high-quality, inclusive, and engaging programme that empowers young people across Nottinghamshire to gain skills for life.

There was a fantastic number of top awards gained in 2024:

- 1,271 Chief Scouts Awards
- 131 Duke of Edinburgh Awards
- 14 Young Leader Belts
- 3 King's Scout Awards

Each one of these awards represents true dedication, ambition and hard work, so a massive congratulations to everyone who earned a top award in 2024. A big thank you goes to our volunteers who have enabled and championed our young people to become high achievers!

## Notts Scouts Adventure

It's been another outstanding year for the Notts Scouts Adventure Team, marked by exciting milestones and impactful achievements. A standout highlight was the first-time use of Hoveringham Activity Centre as part of our County Camp. Over the bank holiday weekend, an impressive 760 activity slots were delivered, giving Cubs, Scouts, and Explorers the chance to take on thrilling water-based adventures. This not only showcased the versatility of the site but also brought our commitment to providing high-quality, accessible adventure to life on a whole new scale.

Outside of The BIG Weekend, the team provided a phenomenal 28,769 activity hours, meaning thousands of young people from Nottinghamshire were able to take to the water in 2024. We also saw the introduction of new activities, such as the Mega SUPs (Stand up Paddleboards), which have been a very popular addition to the programme. The team have also provided nearly 6,000 activity hours for adult training and permit assessments to help make adventurous activities more accessible to our groups.

The work on the new activity centre building is progressing well and will ensure we can cement the long-term future of this fantastic programme offering with improved facilities and a more sustainable building.

None of this would be possible without the tireless dedication of our activity instructors and management teams, so a massive thank you to the 110 volunteers who continue to make the activity team a huge success.

## The BIG Weekend

2024 marked the long-awaited return of our County Camp, The BIG Weekend, our first in six years, and it did not disappoint. The organising team truly went above and beyond, dedicating 18 months of hard work, creativity, and commitment to bring this incredible event to life.

Despite facing significant challenges - most notably the unexpected flooding of our original venue at Southwell Racecourse during the winter of 2023/24 - the team remained resilient and solution-focused. Their determination paid off as we secured a fantastic new home at Newark Showground, allowing the camp to go ahead without compromise.

The BIG Weekend was packed with excitement, offering old favourites like climbing, archery, craft, and shooting, alongside new and exciting activities including our driving school, dunk tank, and silent disco. The energy across the site was electric as over 3,000 participants from every district in Nottinghamshire came

together to celebrate all that Scouting stands for. It was a weekend filled with adventure, laughter, and a powerful sense of community that will be remembered for years to come. We can't wait to bring the camp back in 2026!

A massive thank you to all members of our organising team, staff teams and group volunteers who made the weekend a huge success.

## Nottingham Gang Show 2025

2025 marks a remarkable milestone for the Nottingham Gang Show as it celebrates its 75th anniversary – a true testament to the enduring magic of performing arts in Scouting. Preparations are already well underway as the dedicated team are working tirelessly to deliver another dazzling production on the prestigious Theatre Royal stage.

Auditions held in September saw a record-breaking number of young people step up to be part of the show, resulting in an incredible cast line-up: 123 senior cast members (aged 10+) and 63 junior performers (ages 8–10) will light up the stage in this high-energy, fast-paced variety spectacular.

This show wouldn't be possible without the phenomenal efforts of over 70 volunteers who are bringing it all to life – from the visionary production team to the backstage crew and talented orchestra. Their commitment is providing young people with a truly life-changing opportunity to build confidence, creativity, and lifelong memories. We can't wait to see the curtain rise in March 2025 as Nottingham Gang Show once again delivers a night to remember!

## Looking to the future

2025 is shaping up to be an exciting year for the programme team. From the launch of brand-new county events to the much-anticipated return of the Nottingham Gang Show, there's a real sense of momentum and excitement.

One of the standout developments will be the commencement of construction of the new activity centre building at Hoveringham – a major step forward in enhancing our adventure offering for young people across Nottinghamshire. This sees a substantial financial contribution Nottinghamshire Scouts and cements our commitment to the long-term success of this fantastic activity offering.

We're also expanding our Programme Team to strengthen the support we provide to sections week in, week out. With new resources, fresh inspiration, and a renewed focus on consistency, we're committed to ensuring that every young person experiences a high-quality, engaging, and inclusive programme.





# Support

Our dedicated Support Team plays a vital role in keeping the county running smoothly and effectively behind the scenes. From delivering targeted support for growth and development, to shaping and promoting our perception, assisting with event delivery, and offering expert guidance across a wide range of topics - we're here to support our volunteers in any way we can.

With a wealth of knowledge and experience, the team is always ready to provide practical, hands-on help wherever it's needed, ensuring every part of Scouting in Nottinghamshire thrives.

## Development

Scouting in Nottinghamshire is thriving - and the numbers prove it. Our 2024 growth and development efforts have shown that Scouting is more popular than ever across the county. One of the key initiatives was the introduction of tailored growth plans for every district, helping us identify local opportunities and strategically focus our resources where they're needed most.

We're proud to announce that youth membership in Nottinghamshire grew by an impressive 2.2% in 2024 - more than seven times the national average. This incredible achievement is a direct result of the passion, energy, and unwavering dedication of our volunteers, who continue to deliver high-quality Scouting experiences across every section.

Squirrel Dreys are expanding at pace, with a remarkable 50% increase in Squirrel numbers over the past year - again, far exceeding national trends. These new dreys are giving even more young people the chance to start their Scouting journey earlier, with fantastic outcomes in terms of engagement and development.

While we saw a slight dip in Beaver and Cub numbers, this presents a clear opportunity for renewed focus in 2025 as part of our growth strategy. We're confident that with continued support and innovative approaches, these sections will bounce back stronger.

Equally inspiring is the 11% increase in Young Leaders across Nottinghamshire - a testament to our commitment to youth empowerment and leadership development. By investing in the leaders of tomorrow, we're not only strengthening our current programme but also building a sustainable future for Scouting in the county.



## Perception

Our Perception Team plays a crucial role in shaping how Scouting is seen across Nottinghamshire - from attracting new members and volunteers to strengthening our ties with local communities and leaders. In 2024, we made a conscious investment in new resources and promotional assets to help us better showcase the energy, diversity, and impact of Scouting throughout the county.

A major highlight of the year was welcoming our new Chief Scout, Dwayne Fields, to The BIG Weekend at Newark Showground. Dwayne spent time meeting young people and adult volunteers and was impressed and humbled by the passion and dedication of our incredible volunteers. His visit was a proud moment for Nottinghamshire, helping to raise our profile and celebrate the best of what we do.

We've also continued to strengthen relationships with civic leaders across the county, creating exciting new opportunities to give back to our communities. It was a pleasure to host a range of civic guests at The BIG Weekend, who left inspired by the scale and spirit of the event and the life-changing experiences we offer to young people. Working alongside these leaders, we've also supported the external recognition of our volunteers through local community awards - helping shine a spotlight on the tireless work they do behind the scenes.

Another standout moment came when we were gifted tickets to see Scout Ambassador Tim Peake live at the Royal Concert Hall. We used this as an opportunity to thank a group of Explorer Scouts who volunteer as instructors at the Hoveringham Activity Centre each weekend. Not only did they get to meet Tim after the show, but their story was also featured on national Scout social media channels.

In November, we were incredibly proud to see Harry Redmile, one of our Queen's Scout Award recipients, represent Nottinghamshire at the Festival of Remembrance at the Royal Albert Hall - a powerful symbol of service and dedication.

We've also explored exciting partnerships with local organisations, such as the Nottingham Panthers, who generously offered discounted tickets to our members. Over 600 tickets were sold, giving families and young people a chance to enjoy elite sport and come together as a Scouting community.

## Administration Support

In 2024, we were delighted to welcome Bronya Vardy to the Nottinghamshire Scouts team as our new County Administrator. Since joining, Bronya has made an immediate and lasting impact, bringing a high level of professionalism, organisation, and efficiency to the County Office.

The support provided by the office is absolutely essential to the smooth day-to-day running of our operations. From managing membership enquiries and supporting our charity shop volunteers, to offering vital administrative assistance to the wider County Team, Bronya's work behind the scenes helps keep everything moving forward seamlessly.

We're incredibly grateful to have her as part of the team and look forward to all that we'll achieve together in the years ahead.

## Bog Squad

The Bog Squad is one of our unsung hero teams, playing a vital role in ensuring the success of our events. Often behind the scenes, they are the ones who work tirelessly to maintain the health and wellbeing of all our participants by keeping toilet and shower facilities spotless, and ensuring rubbish is collected and disposed of in a safe and sustainable manner.

They are the true workhorses of our events, often going unnoticed but are crucial to creating a positive



experience for everyone involved. We were thrilled to have their continued support at The BIG Weekend, where their efforts once again ensured the smooth running of our county camp.

Their dedication and hard work are essential, and we couldn't run these large-scale events without them. A huge thank you to The Bog Squad for everything they do!

## Nottinghamshire Emergency Scout Support Team

The Nottinghamshire Emergency Scout Support Team (NESST) had another fantastic year, continuing to play a vital role in the safe and successful delivery of major Scouting events across the county.

A highlight of the year was the hugely popular Challenge Hike at Walesby Forest, which saw over 1,500 young people take part. This event is a true test of teamwork, resilience, and navigation skills!

The team also played a crucial role at The BIG Weekend, delivering essential services including communications, medical support, and operational logistics. Their expertise and professionalism helped to create a safe and well-managed environment for thousands of attendees.

This year also saw significant investment in new equipment, helping to future-proof the team's capabilities and expand the level of support they can offer at county events. NESST is well-positioned to grow alongside our expanding events programme and continue delivering exceptional support where it matters most.

We're incredibly grateful to the NESST volunteers who give their time and expertise so generously - they are an indispensable part of the Nottinghamshire Scouts family.

## Charity Shop

The Nottinghamshire Scout Charity Shop plays a crucial role in supporting the Scouting across the county, providing a vital source of funding. Located in the heart of Sherwood, the shop is run by a team of dedicated volunteers who work tirelessly to sort, display, and sell donated goods. The revenue generated from the sales goes directly towards funding Scout projects, and adult learning in Nottinghamshire.

The charity shop not only serves as a fundraising hub, but also as a key point of engagement for the community. The shop's role in raising awareness of Scouting in the area is equally important, as it allows members of the public to learn more about the work we do, and the impact Scouting has on young people's lives.

After yet another fantastic year, we extend our sincere thanks to all the volunteers who make the charity shop the success it is.





# Transformation

Scouting is undergoing a transformational shift to better meet the evolving needs of our volunteers, with a renewed focus on making their experiences more streamlined and efficient. This transformation began with the launch of our new digital tools in November, which introduced several key upgrades designed to enhance how we work and volunteer with Scouts. The new suite of tools includes a membership system to replace Compass, along with a learning management system, a digital skills hub, and a volunteering opportunities site.

We know that this migration has presented its challenges at times, including technical hurdles and understanding our new titles and ways of working. We know it will be worth it in the end, and we're ensuring that we harness the opportunities this brings, of a more supportive, effective environment for our volunteers, allowing them to focus more on what they do best - inspiring and leading young people.

A huge thank you goes to all our volunteers as we navigate this phase of transformation, with a special mention to our managers who have shown incredible leadership and patience in guiding their teams through this change. Your support and dedication are invaluable.

## Go-Live Support Team

To ensure our volunteers could seamlessly transition to the new digital tools, we established a Go-Live Support Team to provide first-level assistance to our members. This dedicated team has managed hundreds of support tickets, offered guidance and triaged issues to help volunteers get the most out of the new systems. Their hard work and expertise have enabled as many volunteers as possible to experience the new tools and get fully onboard with the changes.

A huge thank you goes to the entire support team for their tireless efforts and commitment - your work has made all the difference in this exciting digital transformation!



# Volunteering Development

Scouting simply wouldn't be possible without the passion, dedication, and generosity of our incredible volunteers across Nottinghamshire. At the heart of supporting this community is our Volunteering Development Team, whose mission is to ensure every adult in Scouting feels valued, supported, and empowered throughout their volunteering journey.

From offering a warm and welcoming start, to providing access to the skills and knowledge needed to succeed, this team plays a vital role in helping volunteers thrive. They also champion the importance of recognition, ensuring that the amazing work our volunteers do does not go unnoticed.

## Learning

We are dedicated to ensuring our volunteers have the skills and knowledge they need to thrive in their roles. Our learning team plays a pivotal role in providing a wide range of training opportunities, both within and beyond the national learning scheme. One of our key areas of focus is First Response training, where we've built a growing team of first aid trainers who are instrumental in equipping our volunteers with the skills needed to ensure the safety of everyone involved in Scouting and to respond confidently in the event of an emergency.

We are thrilled to say that the team awarded 108 wood badges to our volunteers in 2024, showing our strong commitment to volunteer learning and development.

In 2024, we also launched the Nottinghamshire Scouts Experience Survey, allowing us to capture feedback from our volunteers on the topics where they would like more support. As we look ahead, we are committed to offering supplementary learning in key areas, such as mental health, neurodiversity, and managing challenging behaviour. These additional learning opportunities will help our volunteers better navigate the evolving needs of their roles and ensure they have the tools to support young people in the best way possible.

A huge thank you to all our learning team members, including our trainers and learning assessors, for their dedication and hard work in supporting our volunteers. Your commitment to learning and development ensures that Scouting continues to thrive in Nottinghamshire.

## Recognition

Our County Awards Advisory Group has been working tirelessly to ensure volunteers across Nottinghamshire are recognised and celebrated for the incredible contributions they make to Scouting. Their work also extends to supporting district teams in recognising the efforts of local volunteers, helping to foster a culture of appreciation across the county.

In 2024, we were proud to present an impressive 179 Good Service Awards to leaders who have demonstrated exemplary commitment and dedication to Scouting. These awards highlight the passion, energy, and selflessness of individuals who go above and beyond to deliver outstanding experiences for young people.

We also honoured 366 volunteers with Length of Service Awards, recognising their continued dedication over many years. In total, these awards represent a remarkable 5,920 years of combined service to Scouting in Nottinghamshire - a true testament to the strength, stability, and long-standing commitment of our volunteer community.

A heartfelt thank you goes to everyone involved in this important work, and to each and every volunteer who gives their time so generously to make Scouting thrive.

# Youth Shaped Scouting

We remain committed to empowering young people to shape their own scouting experience. In 2024 we saw the appointment of new district youth leads to spearhead this important piece of work locally.

At a county level, we continue to actively engage young people on matters that directly impact their experience. A standout example of this was during the planning of The BIG Weekend, where a group of enthusiastic young people came together to form our Junior Organising Team. Through their input - alongside wider consultation with sections across the county - we were able to shape a camp programme that truly reflected the interests, needs, and preferences of the young people we serve.

## Young Leaders

Our Young Leader Training Scheme continues to be a cornerstone of leadership development in Nottinghamshire, supporting hundreds of young people as they work through the eleven modules designed to build the skills, knowledge, and confidence needed to become outstanding leaders within their sections.

The team runs regular training sessions, alongside tailored support for completing the four Young Leader Missions - all of which contribute towards earning the prestigious Young Leader Belt. This year, we were proud to present 14 Young Leader Belts to exceptional young people who have shown real dedication and growth throughout their leadership journey.

With many more on the verge of completing this remarkable achievement, the future of Scouting leadership in Nottinghamshire is brighter than ever. A huge thank you to the volunteers who deliver this scheme - your commitment is truly shaping the leaders of tomorrow.







**Scouts**  
Nottinghamshire

