

# Scouts

## Blackdown District 2023 Annual Review



Integrity ~ Respect ~ Care ~ Belief ~ Co-operation

# Foreward

By Shawn Rutter, Chair, District Board of Trustees  
Blackdown District Scout Council



It is with great pleasure that I present this review on the activities and achievements of Blackdown Scout District in 2023. As the incoming Chair of the District Board of Trustees on mid-2023, I have had the privilege to witness first-hand the growth and success of our district over the past year.

One of the key highlights of this year has been the significant increase in young people membership within our district. It is a testament to the hard work and dedication of our scout leaders and volunteers who have tirelessly worked to promote scouting and its values to the youth of our community.

Again, this year we have also seen a great variety of activities being organized for our scouts, providing them with opportunities to learn new skills, build character and develop into responsible citizens. From overnight camps and expeditions to community projects, our scouts have been actively involved in a wide range of activities that have enriched their scouting experience.

None of this would have been possible without the selfless contributions of all our volunteers, and behalf of the board of trustees, I would like to extend our sincere thanks and appreciation to each one of our volunteers for your time, dedication and commitment. Your passion for scouting and commitment to our cause has played a vital role in making all these achievements possible, your contributions continue to make a positive difference in the lives of young people and truly embody the spirit of scouting. For anyone reading this not currently in scouting who might be interested in getting involved as a volunteer in some way, I would encourage you to contact us for a discussion.

Looking ahead, I am confident that our district will only continue to thrive and grow as we positively embrace change through transformation.

Let us continue to uphold the values of scouting, actively engaging and supporting young people in their personal development, empowering them to make a positive contribution to society.

# Blackdown District 2023 Annual Review

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### The Values of Scouting

As Scouts we are guided by these values:

**Integrity** - We act with integrity; we are honest, trustworthy and loyal.

**Respect** - We have self-respect and respect for others.

**Care** - We support others and take care of the world in which we live.

**Belief** - We explore our faiths, beliefs and attitudes.

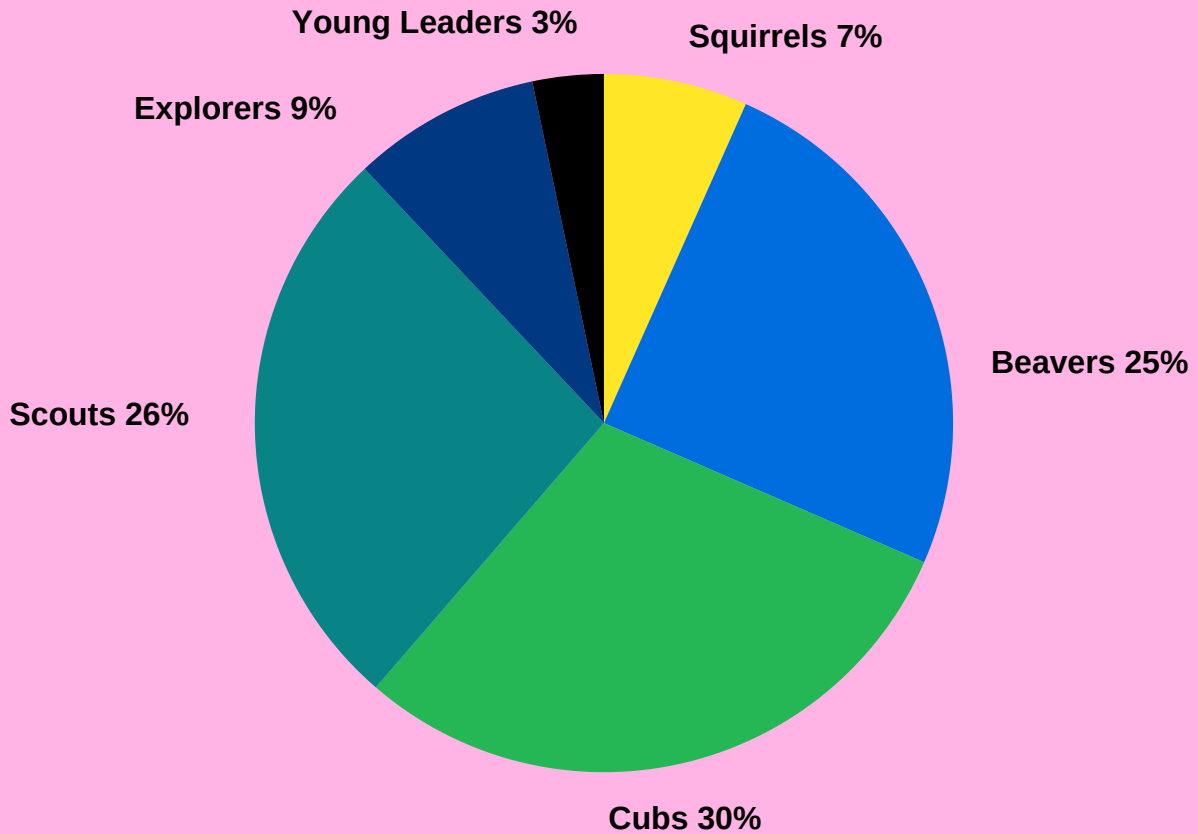
**Co-operation** - We make a positive difference; we co-operate with others and make friends.

# Membership Numbers

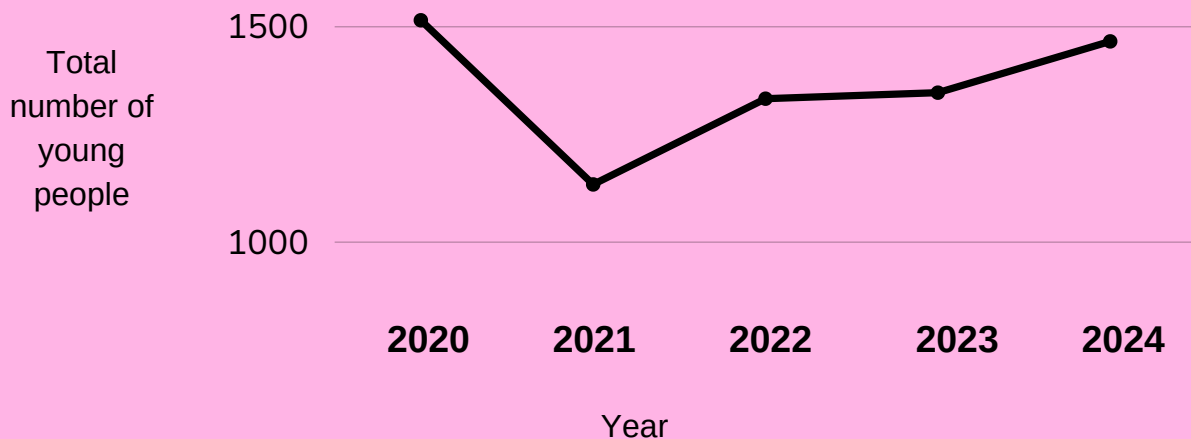
Membership continued to grow through 2023, and as at the Annual Census on 31st January 2024 we had 1466 Young People as members, and were the quickest growing District in Somerset for 2023!



## Young people by section



## Membership trend



# Our District Scouting Family

We have 21 Scout Groups and 8 Explorer units across the District, and in 2023 we welcomed the establishment of 3 new Explorer units.



**Squirrels**

4 - 6 years

**BEAVERS**

6 - 8 years

**cubs**

8 - 10.5 years

**SCOUTS**

10.5 - 14 years

**EXPLORERS**

14 - 18 years

**network**

18 - 25 years

# District Commissioners Report

Nadia Atherton (DC, Lead Volunteer)

Let me start by thanking you all for the countless hours given over to scouting in 2023. I have said it many times, but each time I say with the ultimate gratitude.

The great news is what you have done has led us to rapid growth this year. We are the quickest growing District in Somerset, and have added over 100 young people across the year!

Our biggest growing area is within our Dreys where numbers have risen by about 53%, but at the other end, we have also seen about 40% growth in our 15 year old members.

This is a fantastic picture going into 2024, and proves that what we do matters.

It really matters!

We are having discussions with various groups on opening more Dreys and more Explorer Units, and this is across the District. We hope to further fuel this growth and again reflect this in the census 2025.

We had a phenomenal Duke of Edinburgh and Ten Tors season last year and scouts taking part this year have already dwarfed last year's numbers. We now have a dedicated District Lead for these matters as well as another, for Top Awards.

But it cannot all be plain sailing.

We currently have 21 active groups but not all groups are thriving and due either to /and falling numbers, retiring members or unsuitable environments we of course have challenges too.

One challenge is that we are too popular and cannot meet the demand for Cub and Scout places, with the growth in our Dreys this will have to be considered soon and I am looking into many options.

Another challenge has been the updating and 'making good' at Huish Woods. This has been a huge expense but will ensure we recoup maximum gains across this and future summers to ensure the campsites longevity. But let's never lose sight of why we do this - Scouting, in all its glorious Sections!

One option to both challenges available to me was by using Transformation to increase my District Team and ultimately help you in Groups and Units. We will now have more visible Team Leads, Team Members and Sub - Teams who we can deploy, dissolve or make, in quicker time and to adapt to future challenges.

Many thanks for inviting me to all your section meetings, camps, and celebrations. It is always wonderful to meet you and the young people.

I now look forward to hearing about your successes and challenges and am always available, should I be needed.



# Squirrel Scouts Report

Jana Truby (ADC Squirrels)



Squirrel Scouts in Blackdown District are going from strength to strength. We are now into our 3rd year of Squirrels with Bishops Lydeard, Central, Crewkerne, Ilminster, Trinity, Trull, Wilton and Wiveliscombe Squirrel Sections across the District.

60 Squirrels enjoyed Blackdown District's Squirrel Fun day at Huish Woods. This coronation-themed day was a great success with a variety of activities including making crowns; backwards cooking; whittling and just a lot of fun in the woods. The Squirrel Fun Day this year will be on Sunday 2nd June 2024 at Huish woods, and we will have an Olympics theme.

I continue to support the growth of Squirrels in the district and if you would like any help or advice on opening a Squirrel drey, please contact me.



## Beaver Scouts Report

Jacqui Hopkins (ADC Beavers)

The Beaver Section has been very active with many new Beavers joining the movement over this period. We also now have to factor in the addition of the Squirrels to the waiting lists, with naturally the Squirrels taking precedence. The District Beaver Section commenced their District activities with the Beaver Party. The party was held at Wellsway Leisure Activity Centre, on 12th March 2023. The entertainment was delivered by “Rocktopus”, a lively rendition of songs and plenty of Beaver involvement!

The Beaver Section was well supported at our St. George’s Day Parade. The Beavers were very smartly turned out and impeccably behaved at the service in Vivary Park, following their long walk from the Castle Hotel.

The District Beaver Camp was held over the weekend of 10th and 11th June 2023. Many Colonies set up their Camps earlier in the week and some Colonies booked the Friday night so the Leaders could camp an additional night.

The Bases for this “Circus” Camp were, as we have long come to expect, very varied and particularly colourful in line with the theme of the Camp. Each Colony set up their own bases, and we had Horseshoe throwing, Clown targets, Slip and Slide, Obstacle course, Popcorn and Parachutes, Balloon Animals, Clown Masks, Circus Skills, Tight rope walking, Pot Twirling, Clown figures and the Welly throwing, the latter to win the much coveted Welly Boot Trophy presented annually by Wellington Beavers. The early evening there was a Fancy Dress Parade down to the Camp fire. David our District Beaver Scout Leader along with Baggy led the Camp Fire.



Sunday Morning, Network kindly led the Scouts Own and the Wake and Shake! The camp for Beavers ended at 11am. Thanks to all who took part and supported the Beavers, as always too many to mention individually.

We all learn from these events and are now bearing in mind any alterations required for this year's Olympic Camp.

In October we held another Annual Beaver event, the Handicraft Competition. Once again we had some amazing entries.....leaders are certainly very inspiring with their craft ideas for the Beavers. We look forward to next year's entries. My thanks to all the leaders and helpers, may I express particular thanks to David Humphrey, David is always a reliable help with the District events alongside coping with his own Colony (and ME). Thanks David.

Thank you to James Griffiths, who has joined the District Beaver team recently and for his support. A reminder that thanks for this year's events will be in the next report to 31st December 2024, in case anyone feels I have overlooked their input!!

The Beaver Leaders are great with their thoughts and suggestions. We have really good input from those attending the Beaver District meetings.

Thank you all. Please continue with your support!!



# Cub Scout Report

Sarah Milsted (ADC Cubs)



Packs across the district crammed the year full of activity. As always I'm blown away by what the packs manage to do in their weekly meetings and its always lovely to go and visit and hear about their adventures from the young people themselves. From chip walks to animal encounters, first aid to hikes and sleepovers in aquariums the cubs have had a go at everything this year!

The section was well represented in district parades this year and the cubs were great ambassadors for their groups and the movement as a whole.



In June we held our district camp with a watery theme. Over 250 cubs took part and enjoyed making a splash with water rockets, catapults, bubbles and beach volleyball to name a few of the activities on hand. A huge thank you to the leaders, helpers, young leaders and network members who put on such amazing activities and to the amazing team who ran the camp when I was unable to at the last minute.



This year also saw the district packs take on the challenge of raising money for Scouts against malaria. Packs have a visit teaching them about malaria and re then challenged to raise £5 per cub to send a malaria net to Scouts in Africa who install them for families and teach local communities how to protect themselves. Over the project cubs raised £982 and earned 196 badges! Most importantly the money raised allowed the scouts against malaria team to buy 300 nets which have been distributed in Malawi and Ghana by scouts. Each net can protect multiple people so our cubs have helped save hundreds and hundreds of lives.



This is my final report as ADC cubs as I move on to new scouting adventures in the district, I'd like to thank everyone in the district cub section for their warm welcome and brilliant support over the last five years.



[adc.cubs@blackdownscouts.org.uk](mailto:adc.cubs@blackdownscouts.org.uk)

# Scouts Report

Will Peach (DSL)

# SCOUTS

2023 proved another fun filled year for Blackdown Scouts! There's just so much I could talk about but I'm just going to mention a couple of highlights.

The District (water) activity camp at Brompton Ralph was very well represented with the Scouts enthusiastically taking part in activities ranging from fishing to rafting, archery to pioneering, and kayaking to shooting to name but a few. A big shout out goes to the troop catering teams who were on standby to fuel the Scouts, the Network team who moved from pillar to post to support the activities as required, and of course the activity leader team for their efforts before during and after the camp. We could not do it without you - same again this year.



The orienteering competition took place in the beautiful surroundings of Fyne Court. The weather was kind (ish) and there was plenty of mud to make things interesting. Trull came in first place but special mention to the West Hatch Bananas and Princess Peachs (West Hatch) for fielding slim lined teams and Bishops Lydeard had a strong finish with a record 3rd leg time.

Unfortunately rain stopped play for the annual raft race in September with the River Tone against us – it will be back in 2024 with building and testing in the morning and racing (if rafts are still in one piece) in the afternoon. Get practising those knots and lashings and thinking of design ideas!

We certainly work hard to give our Scouts as many great experiences as we can, which gives both our young people and leaders immense satisfaction!



[adc.scouts@blackdownscouts.org.uk](mailto:adc.scouts@blackdownscouts.org.uk)

## Explorer Scouts Report

Anwar Watson (DESC)

# EXPLORERS

2023 has been a busy year for Explorers in Blackdown as our numbers and units keep growing. We now have Explorer groups in nearly all areas of Blackdown, from Rainbows in Crewkerne, Gurt Wyrms in Wiveliscombe and Apache in Wellington. Ten tors kicked off in January with 1 team doing the 55 miles route, 2 teams doing the 45 miles and 2 teams doing the 35 miles . All teams finished..... amazing!! April saw training start for Duke of Edinburgh Bronze and Silver expeditions.



The start of June saw 3 Silver teams travelling to the New Forest for their cycling and walking expeditions. This was closely followed by 6 Bronze teams walking Exmoor for their expedition.

We also had some of our explorers attend the Harlem Jamboree in the Netherlands. Three of our explorers took on an event called the 'Punisher'. A 40k monster of an a race which they completed and finished with a record time!!!!



June was rounded off by our first District Explorer camp at Brompton Ralph with 75 young people, kayaking, pioneering, cooking, rafting and much more.

In the summer some of our Explorers went to the World Scout Jamboree in South Korea and some went to visit and help schools in Kenya.



In September we had explorers from every group attend County Moot with an Olympic Theme..... Argentina/ Spartan Explorers were victorious.

We ended the year in November with our top awards, Ten Tors and DofE event at Huish Woods. 16 were presented with their Bronze DofE award 9 with their Silver awards

All in all another great year for Explorers and atch this space for more units starting in 2024.....



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## Network Scouts Report

Erica Betteridge (DNC)

Michael Bowditch (DNC)

We are still the only network section in Somerset which is amazing to be part of and to help run. Scarlett has recently moved to become County Network Commissioner late last year and myself and Michael have been appointed as the new Network Commissioners. We have both been at the heart of things since 2022 and hope to continue the great work.

We have had such a busy 2023, starting off with helping out with all the district camps, being supportive to the younger sections and teaching them new skills. We attended Monopoly Run in London, for the 1st time for Network. Network enjoyed the competitiveness of the event by earning points to try to beat other teams from across the UK.



Network were also invited to Gilwell Reunion, this was a great opportunity to meet leaders and fellow Network members across the UK, to learn new skills through different workshops and social networking in the evening. Lastly we were invited to help Somerset Scouts with County Moot where we helped out with Campfire and many activities throughout the weekend.

We have grown our Network Section to 50 active members.



Our plans for the near future is to keep being present at each district event, and exploring Network based camps in the UK and abroad. We try and meet up in the holidays and touch base.

If you are between 18 and 24 years of age, passionate about scouting, want to join a thriving section and have lots of fun whilst teaching young people new skills, please contact us.



[network@blackdownscouts.org.uk](mailto:network@blackdownscouts.org.uk)

# Young Team Report

Richard Smith (District Youth Lead)

The Youth Team have had their first year as a newly formed part of district. Our role is to embed young people's ideas and decisions into local Scouts, helping leadership to understand the importance of being youth shaped and put into practice.

We have been able to run youth forums at the District Cub camp as well as Explorer Moot providing valuable insight as to what young people would like at future camps. Feedback from the Cub camp has been used to plan this year's Cub camp which is fantastic to see.

We also ran a group from with Wyvern Explorers. We would like to visit more sections over the next year, if you are a group or section leader and want the youth team to visit then please get in touch at: [yc@blackdownscouts.org.uk](mailto:yc@blackdownscouts.org.uk)  
We can run a youth forum and play some games!

In the next year we will be increasing our activity in the district. We are planning to have a youth forum activity at each district camp with the goal of each attendee earning part of their YouShape award. We also have a Young Leaders camp planned, delayed from the original date in March, which we are looking forward to!



[yc@blackdownscouts.org.uk](mailto:yc@blackdownscouts.org.uk)

## District Support & Activities

Led by our hard working and committed DC Nadia Atherton and supported by the Board of Trustees, as a District leadership team we do what we can to provide advice and assistance to groups, to support volunteers and enrich the Scouting experience of our young people.

In 2023 the way in which District enhanced experiences for young people included:

- Supporting the opening of 3 new Explorer units.
- Leading the Duke of Edinburgh (DofE) award programme
- Running a St Georges Day parade through the County Town.
- Supporting the Gang Show.
- Running District events at Huish Woods for Squirrels, Beavers and Cubs.
- Running Brompton Ralph activity events for Scouts and Explorers.
- Running a raft race for Scouts and Explorers
- Running a Beavers fun and craft days.
- Running an archery competition for Scouts.
- Supporting and running the training for Ten Tors for both District and County Explorer participants.
- Appointments committees met 16 times throughout the year to welcome new adults to scouting.
- Operating Huish Woods.
- Financial assistance with the cost of training for adults.
- Grants for young people for international expeditions and events.

In 2024 we plan to do all the above in addition to the following:

- Support the opening of another 3 new Explorer units.
- Support the opening of a new Squirrel drey.
- Run a new Cub lego day competition event

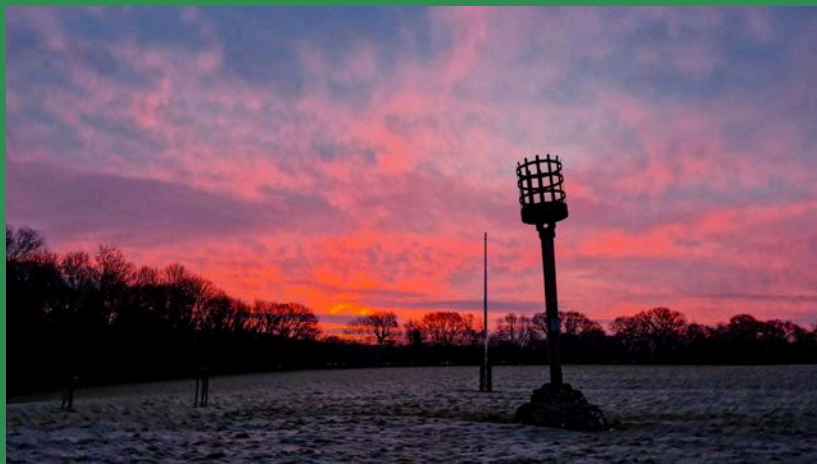


The names and roles of the District team are here:  
[www.blackdownscouts.org.uk/about-us/district-team](http://www.blackdownscouts.org.uk/about-us/district-team)

# Huish Woods

## Supporting Scouting and Young People from the District and beyond.

This year saw another full year of the Campsite, with several districted events, summer camps and other overnight experiences. We estimate we have had over 11,500 individual visits to the Woods in 2023, with approximately 8,300 night away experiences for young people.



The summer saw us host our big three district events, Squirrel Day, Beaver Camp and Cub Camp, luckily it was a lot dryer this year! We also supported the county hosting the Scout Challenge Day and the Explorer Moot.

Huish Woods is always a busy place with people coming and going from many different youth organisations all doing a great job helping and shaping the lives of young people, who all come from different backgrounds.

We saw an increased number of schools use the facility this year alongside use from cadet forces and adult education groups as well. It is lovely to see so many of these groups rebook for next year and through word-of-mouth others joining us as well. We benefit from these external users, not only financially to help invest back in the woods, but as a great advert of what we as Scouts get up to in the great outdoors.



As owners of Huish Woods we have a responsibility to invest in the maintenance and infrastructure of this great asset of ours that past, current and future generations benefit from. Overseen by the Board of Trustees we have a volunteer management team responsible for operating the Woods, and mid year we welcomed Wendy Tancock as the Woods Administrator, who has proven herself invaluable for its smooth running.



Unfortunately, this year, we had to make the hard decision to retire our climbing tower, this was due to the difficulty of certifying the base scaffold structure. We have now started on plans to replace the tower, looking at many possibilities to include some other high rope activities.

Going into next year we are renovating the zipwire which will be ready for spring 2024, along with continued investment into the Archery, Shooting, Tomahawks, Woodland Crafts and many others. With the Woods team working hard to improve activity infrastructure and equipment, by early summer 2024 we are sure you will notice some positive changes.

The site relies on many volunteers to keep it running and without them we could not keep going, doing many jobs from grass cutting to photo copying and car park duties. If you can spare a few hours to help out then please do contact us.

Finally, special thanks to our service team (Wednesday Crew), our instructors, and management who do so much, and to all that use the Woods.

**'Nature and the outdoors are languages that can be learned. Once you identify a beech tree, tie a clove hitch or cook a simple meal over a fire that you've built yourself, you'll never forget it.'**

Bear Grylls, Chief Scout



[huishwoods.org.uk](http://huishwoods.org.uk)



[info@huishwoods.org.uk](mailto:info@huishwoods.org.uk)

# Young People Awards

## Chief Scout Awards

Congratulations to all our young people who have earned their Chief Scout Award in 2023!

The Chief Scout's Awards are the highest award that can be earned in each section, from Acorn for Squirrels to Platinum and Diamond for Explorers. They show that our members have given new things a go, played their part, and stuck it out, even when the going got tough. It's a really great achievement, and every award recipient should be proud.

The photos are just of a small selection of the many happy faces of award recipients!



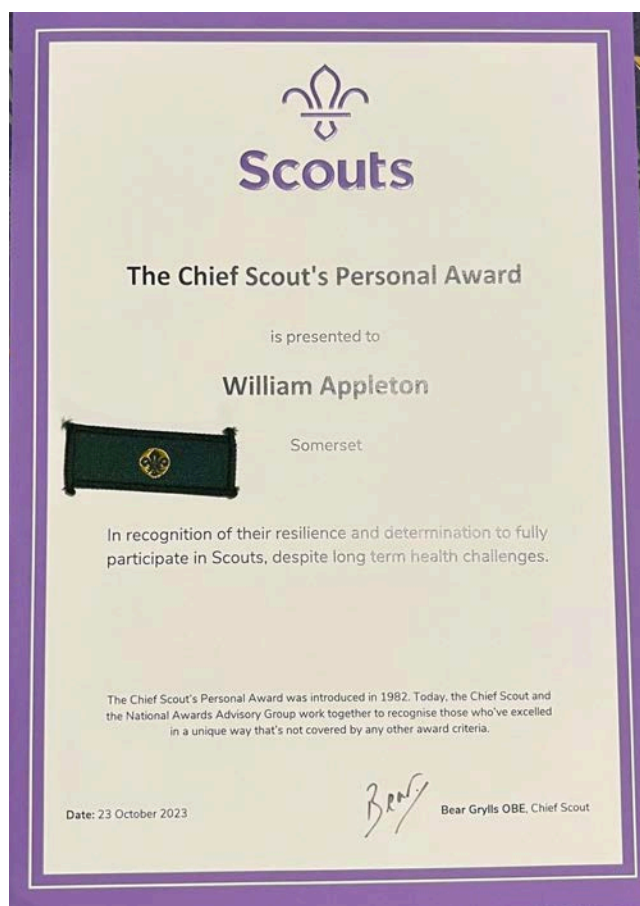
# Young People Awards

## The Chief Scout's Personal Award Commissioners Commendation

Despite health problems **William Appleton**, a member of Dragon Explorers, has shown immense dedication to Scouting and been recognised with both a County Commissioner's Commendation, and The Chief Scout's Personal Award.

To quote William's Chief Scout's Personal Award citation:

Your story is an inspiration to us all. It captures all that is good about what we do as scouts and your commitment to the Movement truly makes you one of our shining lights.



The Chief Scout's Personal Award is awarded by the Chief Scout, in consultation with the Awards Board to recognise achievement not covered by the criteria for any other awards.



# Young People Awards

## The Duke of Edinburgh's Award (DofE)

The DofE programme allows young people build on a huge range of practical and character skills – like resilience, problem-solving, team-working and drive – and come out the other side with a stronger sense of self. It's something really brilliant to put on their CV, or to talk about in their university and job applications. As a district we are passionate about supporting the programme, providing the assistance required to help our members achieve thier DofE Awards.

2023 saw 45 awards completed\*, and we congratulate the following:



### Gold Award

Abigail Littlewood



### Silver Award

Dan Anderson  
Jake Coombes  
Cameron Gage  
Annabel Hanson  
Rowan Hooper

Rory Kerton  
Callum McDonald  
Caitlin Panks  
George Perry  
Owen Pinguenet

Hugh Pluckwell  
Jack Reed  
Joshua Symes  
Oliver Willmott



### Bronze Award

Grace Allard  
Tom Barnes  
Summer Blake  
Elijah Brown  
Sophie Bult  
Daniel Campbell  
Ellie Chapman  
James Chatterton  
Lillian Contreras  
Adam Cummings

Abigail Eastman  
Lewis Gamble  
Alfy Gribble  
Ella Holmes  
Milly Howe  
Rory Kerton  
Rosie Lambert  
William Marsh  
Ekaterina Medvedeva  
Asta Myram

Alexander Peach  
Joshua Pearl  
Susannah Rook  
Sam Rosser  
James Sheehan  
Will Sullivan  
Lucia Swindell  
Sienna Swindell  
Martha Tuff  
Amelia Turner

\* Awards approved during the period 1st January - 31st December 2023

## Adult Awards

At Scouts we want to thank all our volunteers for their contribution to Scouting - it's an important way to make sure people stay with us and to recognise their achievements. Congratulations to all our volunteers who received awards in 2023!

### Award for Merit

Sarah Milsted, ADC Cubs Blackdown  
Gemma Champion, ABSL Ilton & Broadway  
Andrew Milsted, DDC Blackdown  
Clover Heather, DESL Gurt Wyrms



### Chief Scouts Commendation

Dave Rosser, GSL West Hatch  
Debra Cummings, SL Hinton St George



### Commissioners Commendation

Barney Kerr  
Lee Troake



## Long Service Awards

Length of service awards are available to Members and Associate Members of the Association with an adult appointment, uniformed or not (with the exception of occasional helpers). These awards are issued automatically based on the length of service shown on Compass.

In 2023 there were 43 awards recognising 405 years of service!

### 40 Years

David Eele, Active Support Unit



### 30 Years

John Lewis, Blackdown Executive Member  
Paula Cox, Treasurer Rockwell Green



### 20 Years

Alison Cottey, Executive Member Staplegrove  
Victoria Venn, DESA Blackdown



## 15 Years

Marc Denman, Active Support Unit Blackdown  
Jason Bowie, SL West Taunton  
Robin Cassell, Blackdown Appts Committee  
Robyn Taylor, ASL Ilminster  
Richard Allard, CSL 34th West Hatch



## 10 Years

Simon Davidson, ASL 1st Taunton Wilton Scout Group  
Mark Maynard, AESL Dragon Explorers  
Andrew Maynard, Active Support Huish Woods  
Simon Gittins, SL Stoke St Gregory  
Jennifer Davey, Active Support Gangshow  
Jessica Morgan, Active Support Huish Woods  
James Nelson, ASL Scouts Staplegrove  
Paul Blease, CL Cubs Bishops Lydeard  
Shaun Hendy, ACL Wellington



## 5 Years

James Ellis, ASqL 1st Taunton Wilton  
Miles Wood, ASL Trull  
David Willmott, ABL Crewkerne  
Kerry Newberry, GSL Chard  
Peter Watkins, Treasurer Trull  
Rachel Watson, Treasurer Central  
Tina Doherty, ABL Crewkerne  
Ann-Marie Kitchener, Chair West Monkton  
Catherine Cann, SAS Gang Show  
David Warren, Deputy Chair Crewkerne  
Gloria Hamlet, SA Beavers West Monkton  
James Griffiths, BL West Monkton  
Oak Wells, ACSL Trull  
Robert McDonald, SA Cubs 1st Taunton Wilton  
Selina Shaw, SA Scouts Trinity  
Stuart Whittaker, Chair 3rd Taunton Bishops Lydeard  
Will Barnett-Jones, SA Scouts Central  
Edward Trott, ASL Scouts Trull  
Gwynfor Jones, Treasurer Wellington  
Kate Pollard, Treasurer West Taunton  
Kelly McKennan, Treasurer Central  
Simon James Atherton, 1st Taunton Wilton  
Steve Contreras, 1st Taunton Wilton  
Stuart Rance, District Skills Instructor



## Wood Badge

Since September 1919, volunteers in the Scouts have been awarded the Wood Badge once they have completed their leader training.

Derek Smith, ASL Staplegrove

Lauren Armes, ASL West Monkton

Katherine Sheehan, ASL Hinton St George

Adam Turner, ASL Trull

Nicola Woodgate, ASL

Richard Allard, CSL West Hatch

Samantha Blease, ACL 3rd Taunton Bishops Lydeard

Thomas Luckhurst, ASL 3rd Taunton Bishops Lydeard

William Peach, DGSL Trull

Jane King, ACSL North Taunton

Jason Bowie, SL West Taunton

Kirsty Guyett, ACSL Chard & SL Chard

Mark Hughes, GSL Trull

Michael Brunton, GSL 1st Taunton Wilton

Ben Toms, ABSL West Hatch

James Mears, CL Wiveliscombe

Christopher Cox, ASL Rockwell Green

Christopher Kurton, ABSL Bishops Lydeard

Jack Brunning, ACSL Wiveliscombe

Miles Wood, ASL Trull

Nigel Stone, BL Chard

Richard Smith, ABSL Ilton & Broadway

Ruth Bektas, ABL Wiveliscombe

Simon Davidson, SL 1st Taunton Wilton



## Cheers for volunteers

Thank you for the scarves rolled,  
songs sung, and memories created.  
Most of all, thank you for the difference  
you're making to young people's lives.

## Several people have Gone Home in 2023

It is with great sadness that some of our Scouting colleagues passed away in 2023. Our thoughts and prayers are with their families, and we honour them here to say thankyou for their contributions to Scouting.

**MICHAEL ROURKE** died on the 27th April age 91. For many years he was Scout Fellowship Chairman taking members on a variety of outings as he was a Blue Badge Guide. Lunch gatherings were always well attended and a time to catch up. Visiting Speakers brought a variety of topics to the Fellowship. Serving refreshments at events was another regular role.



Those involved with Gang Show will have been sad to hear of the passing of **ALANAH WILKINS** on the 3rd of May aged 28. Alanah did manage an appearance at the 2023 show and her involvement goes back years. The Gang Show formed a Guard of Honour for her funeral with a very large attendance from the cast. Her Mum Linda always helps in the dressing room, a role she has fulfilled for many years.



**NICKY ALLEN**, died peacefully on the 16th of June aged 56. Nicky was an integral member of Blackdown and Somerset Scouting and touched many lives. She presented the Safeguarding training, so many will have shared and gained from this.



Her Husband Martin wrote:

“By now, many of you will have already heard the news that my wife, Nicky Allen passed away after battling valiantly with a rubbish hand of cards for almost the past decade. The family wish to express our thanks for all the warm words that have been received of late. In the past few weeks we have seen more of the family than we had done for ages, and Clare her daughter was with me at home when she passed. Lee and James have also been frequent visitors of late. I gather that the flags were flown at half mast over the District Cub Camp, which must have come as a surprise to those that didn't know her, an act which came as a surprise to me and, I'm sure, would have caused her to cringe in embarrassment, as would the letter of condolence we have received from the senior Divisional Judge in the Upper Tribunal in the Strand; she has clearly made an impression on people. Her time as Beaver Leader at Norton Fitzwarren, then in various roles in District and County have helped others and provided support in times of need, I'm sure.

**SUE POWELL** passed away on Wednesday evening 15th of November. She will be known to those of you who were from South Somerset District. Sue had not been well for a while and died aged 63. She leaves a Husband Norman who is a regular member of the Wednesday Crew at Huish Woods. "Norman - You have our thoughts and prayers at this sad time. Some of us have a mixture of memories of Sue at County Cub Days and Camps."

Sue worked with Cubs at Crewkerne from 1989. In January 2009 she took on the role of Group Scout Leader a role she held for over 11 years. She was also a County Training Advisor..She also held other roles of Group Administrator, Active Support Member. She was awarded the Award For Merit in 2015 followed by the Chief Scout's 30 year Service Award in 2019.



**DAVE MULLEN** passed away on the 20th December in Minehead Hospital where he had been for several weeks. He leaves wife Jackie, Son Wesley & Daughter Toni plus several Grandchildren. He was aged 71.

He started as GSL at Norton Fitzwarren in 1989 and this is where his love of Gang Show grew producing many Group shows over the years.

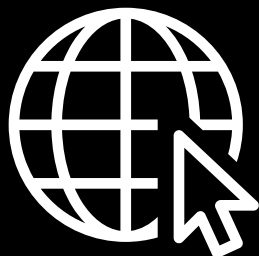
He then became involved in producing Shows for the District involving Guiding & Scouting. Those who have been involved in the District Gang Show over many years/decades will have know him being called 'Grumpy' this was mainly as he didn't smile very often. He took the show to many places & countries.

Dave received many Scouting Awards including Bar to the Award for Merit in 2007, Commissioner Commendation in 2019 and 40 year service Award in 2022.

# Keeping our members informed

## Online

Our media team work hard to keep our website and social media upto date, please check it out and follow us on Facebook to keep upto date on all the exciting activities our members are participating in!



[www.blackdownscouts.org.uk](http://www.blackdownscouts.org.uk)



[@blackdownscouts](https://www.facebook.com/blackdownscouts)

If you have any photos / posts that you would like to share please email them to the media team: [media@blackdownscouts.org.uk](mailto:media@blackdownscouts.org.uk).



**BLACKDOWN DISTRICT NEWSLETTER**  
PUBLISHED BY BLACKDOWN SCOUT COUNCIL



## Newsletter

We have a popular Newsletter that continues to be produced and circulated monthly, and 2023 started with its 100th edition!

Regular news items include:

- District updates
- Dates & details of future events
- Appointment reports
- Activity training courses information
- Huish Woods updates
- Grant information
- Section news reports



This is an important way to keep our members informed and let everyone one what groups are upto, and we want to say a big thank you to our editor, Marian Scott!

Please do keep the copy coming in to: [adc.general@blackdownscouts.org.uk](mailto:adc.general@blackdownscouts.org.uk).

**They make all the difference. So could you.  
Help young people step up and dream big.**



**Blackdown District Scouts are calling all tea makers, tidy-uppers, activity planners and helpers for as little or as much time as you can spare.**

**You too can help our young people aged 4 to 25 years develop skills for life.**

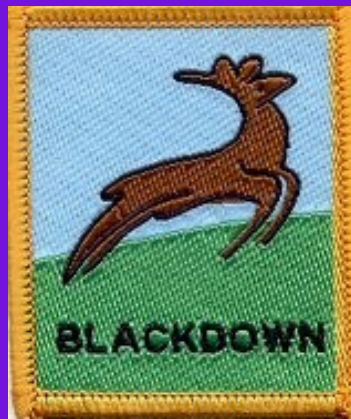
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**#SkillsForLife**





# Scouts

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