

Our Plan.





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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Barton St David Scout Group was established in 1994 and has a track record of providing a high quality service to our community in which there are no other youth activities. Literally hundreds of youngsters have benefited from attending.

This is our second formal strategic plan. The first was agreed in 2013 and had a lifespan of 5 years. Actions are largely complete from that plan and so it is timely to refresh the strategy and create a new set of actions to help us achieve our vision of providing top quality Scouting to youngsters in our catchment area.

This vision is driven by our ethos to provide adventurous activities and personal development opportunities for local children between the ages of 6 and 18 years of age. The group is totally committed to providing a range of fun, interesting and challenging activities, camps and outings to help children reach their full potential. We believe that young people develop most when they are 'learning by doing', when they are given responsibility, work in teams, take acceptable risks and learn to think for themselves.

These are tough times and we try to keep subscriptions down and local fundraising efforts are vital. We encourage gift aid and *EasyFundraising* donations. Community groups often struggle to get and retain volunteers. Fortunately we have a strong core of willing helpers and we continually add to this number. Last year during weekly sessions, camps and outings we calculated that our volunteers gave over 3500 hours for the youngsters benefit. Even at minimum wage this has a value to the community of over £32,000. We were recognised in 2016 as being the best youth group in South Somerset at the annual Gold Star awards

Our Group has a unique selling point. We have an indoor meeting place at Barton St David Village Hall and an outdoor meeting place at Orchard Park Farm (by the very kind and generous permission of the MacDonald Family). Initially the group was part of the Baden Powell Scouts' Association but in 2012 we moved to the Scout Association. This has been a huge success with easier access to training, better support and advice. It also means that this plan for the future is mindful of the Scout Association Strategy for 2023 with its 4 strategic objectives of Growth, Inclusion, Youth Shaped and Community Impact. We currently deliver Scouting for Beavers, Cubs and Scouts and have a partnership agreement with East Somerset in the joint provision of an Explorer Unit.

Barton Scouting has always aimed to provide something for everyone. There have been numerous local camps in Somerset and Dorset and we hope to extend that to national and international experiences. We have always taken a clear role in our local community, taking part in local events such as Remembrance and Carnivals. We aim to continue to build on this rich and successful past and continue to develop the Group in the future. This plan outlines the ways in which we feel that this should be done. A summary is seen in Appendix one with more detail can be seen in the main section of the plan.

NATIONAL SCOUTING. PREPARING BETTER FUTURES, DELIVERING SKILLS FOR LIFE

The emerging vision for Scouting 2023 (Preparing Better Futures, Delivering Skills for Life) states that Scouting has long been a powerful force, bringing communities together and preparing young people for the future. Today, pressures and expectations on young people are increasing and Scouting has never been more important in helping them develop the skills they need to succeed in a changing environment. Scouting values, character building, leadership and team working skills are highly valued by employers. Many of the Gold Medal winners at London and Rio were Scouts (Helen Glover, Victoria Pendleton and Joe Clarke). The same can be said for millions of others who have gone on to excel in their chosen field including Tim Peake the astronaut.

However, the Scout Association knows that it can make a bigger impact; bring communities closer together to support social integration; support more young people to get on in life to support social mobility; help more young people to feel better about themselves to increase their wellbeing and help them to play a full part in their communities.

The strategic objectives of **growth**, **inclusion**, **youth shaped** and **community impact** will be delivered by three work areas:

- 1. Programme. Deliver a quality programme and review offer for 14-25 year olds
- 2. People . Improve the volunteer journey and extending reach
- 3. Perception. Transform our image and extend our reach

This work is supported by the continued focus on

- **Safeguarding:** Invest to continue to lead the way in keeping young people safe
- Digital: invest to improve support for volunteers, especially our leaders
- Governance: Ensure good governance
- A Million Hands: Continue A Million Hands, with issues chosen by young people,
- Key events: Actively participate in UK, European and World events.
- Staff development: Provide the highest level of practical support to volunteers,

Barton St David Scouts also aligns its actions to the East Somerset District Plan "Building the Future" which was endorsed by the District Executive in February 2015. The District aims to

- 1. Empower Young People
- 2. Promote and value volunteers
- 3. Manage growth and sustainability
- 4. Lead effectively
- 5. Promote inclusion
- 6. Community Impact

At its best, Scouting responds by bringing young people together and giving chances for them to shine regardless of background, providing continuity and practical support.

BARTON ST DAVID SCOUT GROUP IN 2018

A comprehensive self assessment was carried out in 2013 to guide the development of our first plan. As this is a refresh of that plan the assessment has been carried out by the Scout Leaders and informed by consideration of any compliments, complaints, suggestions etc by parents, the District, County and other stakeholders. It also considers how best to support the implementation of the Scout Association strategy for 2023.

OUR SUCCESSES AND STRENGTHS

General

Each year we create wonderful memories for children and their parents. We build a good culture and expect good behaviour to be demonstrated by the youngsters. We focus on providing an increasingly challenging, varied and fun programme and as a result have increased the long-term retention of our membership. This has resulted in a County Award for growth of more than 25% in one year. In 2012 we had 24 youth members, 46 in 2013 and over 60 in 2017. In addition, our partnership Explorer Unit has 5 members and we now want to increase that number, encouraging more to transfer from Scouts.

Youngsters of all ages show strong personal development with new skills learnt, increasing confidence and greater self-discipline. We are always pleased that such a large proportion turn out for Remembrance and the Christmas Carol Service within our community.

The Team

The wider team of Leaders, Officers and parents have an impressive range of skills. This team give many hours voluntarily to supervise sessions, camps and activities or fundraise. Leaders undertake the comprehensive Leader or Manager and Supporter training as required by the Scout Association. They are strong role models creating a positive culture and demonstrating real leadership skills by empowering the youngsters and providing a balanced and engaging programme

Engagement with Parents

An area for improvement in 2013 has been transformed in the last five years to a strength. In particular the Beaver Section excels in drawing parents into the Group as occasional helpers. A significant number of these have 'upgraded' their support to Section Assistants or Leaders. We have reduced levels of early drop off of children, the late pick up of children and the need for several reminders to collect the termly subscriptions to almost zero. We have filled the Chairman, Treasurer and Secretary role recently. Parents who are able to do so have signed Gift Aid Forms. We see this as a really positive change.

Facilities

Another area for improvement in 2013, now a strength. The Group is lucky to use Barton St David Village Hall at an affordable rent. There are advantages to the building including being in the heart of the community, adjacent to a sports field and we have no responsibilities for maintenance. A huge improvement over the last five years has been the establishment of an outdoor meeting place at Orchard Park Farm which gives us a space to do a multitude of activities and store our equipment safely with easy access.

Leader workload

In 2013 Leader workload was an area for improvement. It was considered to be too heavy with the risk that they could become disenchanted or simply exhausted. They were arranging weekly sessions, camps, outings, collecting subs, attending training, attending group meetings and keeping the accurate records needed by the Association. Although our Leaders still work exceptionally hard the burden is reduced by the introduction of Online Scout Manager which eases the admin burden of programme planning, badge awards and event organisation (and more); more parents doing BACS payments for subs and payments, training is more local and much is available online; online banking, an account at the Yeovil Scout Shop and a more active Executive committee which has taken on the major burden of fundraising. We have also found new leaders and this has shared the role for others.

Financial Position

In 2013, our financial position was an area for improvement. While not complacent we have reached a good position where our income has equalled our expenditure, we have received a number of grants for capital expenditure on tents etc and the Chairman and GSL have worked extensively to bring in a considerable amount of historic gift aid. We are aware that much of each youngsters Subs goes on Capitation (Scout membership) and hall fees. This means that there is a shortfall of funding from the present subs to pay for activities, equipment and resources for sessions and camps.

Community Relationships and Communications

Another area for improvement in 2013. The Group has always felt well supported by the community. Barton St David Hall Committee have been understanding as we have reduced or increased our sessions in recent years and have kept the rent low to support a local group. We have played a stronger role in Remembrance, Barton Carnival and have instituted an annual Carol Service in our local Church. The GSL does a regular update for the various parish magazines in our area and the Group has a high profile locally. Use of Facebook pages has allowed parents to see what their children have been doing within their sections. The use of the software Scout Manager has also improved internal communication making it easy for all Leaders to access the information that they need and making it much easier to plan and award badges along with a range of other administrative benefits.

AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT IN 2018

The Group has made huge strides in reducing the number of areas for improvement but we must not be complacent and continue to self assess as we move forward to see where an extra focus of effort would improve our progress.

Facilities

While the issues around our facilities in 2013 have largely been overcome we would still like some more room to have permanent notice boards for the Group at Barton Hall. Work also need to happen to build more cooperative relationships with other users of the hall.

Financial Position

Our financial position is now much more sustainable and we still are able to keep Subs low. Gift Aid has been a real success but sadly parents have not chosen to sign up to Easy Fundraising. This could ease many future problems but despite many efforts our main income from this site comes from Leaders, Officers and friends of the above.

Very sadly our partner Explorer Group is not in such a fortunate position financially. If Subs remain at £90 per year after capitation £40 remains. To cover hall hire 11 children are needed to break even, to add expenses of £360 per year means that 20 children are required. Adding resources for badges, neckers, equipment replacement etc brings the number required for a section to 24. The Beavers, Cubs and Scouts have always worked on a cross subsidy arrangement to overcome these difficulties. A major focus for the next five years has to be supporting the Explorer Unit to become sustainable.

Leaders

While we have a good number of Leaders there is constant churn. This means that we should always remain on the look out for additional volunteers. Indeed, if we had more Leaders we might be able to open additional sections to reduce our waiting list.

Communications

A strength in previous years was our website. While it still functions as a shop window and contact point for new members it is no longer regularly updated. It would be good to find someone to revive and refresh our website and make it the first point of contact for seeing what we are doing.

WHAT DO THE CHILDREN LIKE DOING?

THE YOUNGSTERS VIEWS

We carried out some informal consultation with Cubs and Scouts in 2011. They told us that:





THE LEADERS' OBSERVATIONS

Beavers

Beavers are seen to enjoy a variety of activities that include games, badgework and are fun. Activities that are not at all like school and that are messy are particularly popular. They enjoy feeling part of a team and working in small groups as this appears to help them grow in confidence. They are proud of their achievements and like awards and prizes. They do better with clear expectations and when they are given responsibility.

Cubs

Outside activities, particularly adventurous ones such as rock climbing and firelighting are particularly successful. Small group work, guest presenters, cooking, games and visits are popular. Cubs enjoy feeling part of a team and the sixes and earning responsibility. IThey seem to enjoy the chance to relax from school pressures as well as gaining badges.

Scouts

Outside activities are particularly popular as are games. However, inside craft and cooking activities along with speakers and visits have been equally successful. Activities that allow or encourage independence are appreciated especially camps and adventurous activities. Gaining badges is not universally a priority but Scouts do like more involvement in their programme planning and a chance to have fun away from the increasing pressures of school and exams.

OUR PLAN

Our vision for the future of the group is that of a big family feel, doing the Scouting basics excellently while constantly striving to give the youngsters a range of exciting new opportunities. Each of our strategic objectives will be work together towards these common aims.

There are seven elements to our plan:

What do we want to achieve?

- 1. Growth
- 2. Youth Shaped Activities and Quality Programme
- 3. Inclusion
- 4. Community Impact

Note for action plan: GSL is Group Scout Leader

1. GROWTH

We want to achieve a steady growth of number of children as we do not like turning children away. This can only be achieved if we can have a similar increase in the number of Leaders. We also need to ensure that we keep a critical mass in each section and address the fact that currently we have an unequal gender split and lose some children each time they move section. We feel that our maximum size should be 1 Scout Troop, 2 Cub Packs and 2 Beaver Colonies. In particular we would like to increase the size of the Explorer Unit.

To achieve this we will:

1	Action	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	Resource required / Comment
a.	Revitalise and maintain the website	\checkmark	\checkmark	\checkmark	\checkmark	\checkmark	Webmaster
b.	GSL to continue to seek new Leaders						
c.	Increase youth membership if adult support sufficient						Be aware that we need to appear equally attractive to boys and girls
d.	Section Leaders and Group to request parental support	\checkmark	\checkmark	\checkmark	\checkmark	\checkmark	

What resources will we need?

- 5. People. Leaders and training
- 6. Facilities and equipment
- 7. Financial stability

2. YOUTH SHAPED ACTIVITIES AND QUALITY PROGRAMME

We want to promote a whole-family feel to the group with integrated programming across the sections showing increasing progression. We want a few whole group activities each year and intend to work on aspects of everyday Scouting procedures and behaviours. Areas for improvement include smartness including the wearing of uniform and on parade. At sessions we want to work towards higher standards of behaviour especially respect for Leaders and any visitors.

Providing a quality programme is a requirement of any Group, however we want to work to increase the range of opportunities for the youngsters. We want to provide a wide variety of activities within normal sessions, along with other local groups and at camps.

To achieve this we will:

2	2 Action	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	Resource required / Comment
а	Section Leaders to liaise each term when programming to ensure progress through the sections	V	V	V	V	V	
b	Leaders to increase the links between our Scouts and Explorers by visits and joint activities		V	V		V	
C.	Maintain smart turnout at parades and similar	\checkmark					
d	Leaders to ensure that youngsters are involved in planning programme, challenges and priorities	V			V		
e	Leaders to check annually that their section programme meets quality programme checker criteria	V	V	V	V	V	
f.	Aim to take part in a national camp experience						Sufficient Leaders Parental support
g	Consider an international camp experience						As above but also including mandatory individual fund- raising by youngsters

3. INCLUSION

We want to provide Scouting to everyone who wants to join us and ensure that all of our members and community feel part of our progress and success. In addition, we want to feel an important part of the District, County and National Scouting provision.

We want parents to feel able to help out, by offering more specific opportunities.



4. COMMUNITY IMPACT AND COMMUNICATIONS

We want a greater community profile in our catchment villages, feeling more of a sense of partnership with our local communities. We want to be seen at important village events and be seen to be an asset to the area. In addition, we want our Scouts, Cubs and Beavers to feel part of the wider Scouting Community in Yeovil and District.

4	Action	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	Resource required / Comment
a.	All to attend Remembrance each year		\checkmark	\checkmark		\checkmark	
b.	All to attend one village event each year	\checkmark	\checkmark	\checkmark	\checkmark	\checkmark	For example the village days, carnivals etc
c.	Sections to plan to conduct a community related activity each year						EG Nursing home visit, bag packing event in local supermarket etc
d.	Leaders to plan one event with other local groups each	\checkmark	\checkmark	\checkmark	\checkmark	\checkmark	

4	Action	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	Resource required / Comment
	year						
e.	Leaders to arrange an open day for their section						EG Christmas post
f.	Continue to promote Group via local parish magazines	\checkmark	\checkmark	\checkmark	\checkmark	\checkmark	
g.	Revamp and revitalise our website						Need to find a webmaster

The first four aims of our plan lay out what we want to do. The final three aims make clear what resources we must have if we are to achieve our aspirations for the future

5. PEOPLE – LEADERS AND TRAINING

Leaders are the most important asset of our Scout Group. They put in hours of voluntary commitment to ensure a balanced and fun programme for the youngsters. We need to ensure that we continually seek new Leaders, both for succession planning and to allow us to boost the numbers of children. We must ensure that all Leaders are trained appropriately and feel supported by the GSL, the District and the system.

We must ensure that our Leaders do not become exhausted and disenchanted by feeling that they have to run sessions, fund-raise, do the admin plans for camp or visits and keep up with the training requirements of the job itself.

5	Action	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	Resource required / Comment
a.	GSL to recruit more Leaders, so that there are at least three regular adults per section	V	V	V	V	V	
b.	GSL to ensure all Leaders have up-to-date training, first aid, nights away qualifications etc						
c.	GSL to share information about the range of support available						Done at regular Scouters meetings
d.	Leaders to engage with the District Section Meetings to understand the support available	V	V	V	V	V	
e.	Leaders to consider arranging social events so that the team bonds more closely together	V	V	V	V	V	

6. FACILITIES AND EQUIPMENT

If the Group is to continue to grow and provide a wider range of activities, we will need to constantly assess our equipment and store it effectively.

6	Action	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	Resource required / Comment
a.	Each year assess prioritised equipment needs for the next five years	V	V	V	V	V	This will include tents, fridge, cookers etcOnce the needs are known, the costs can be assessed and fund-raising put in place
b.	Executive Committee to consider whether grant applications are required to purchase capital equipment	V					Once the group comes up with options, these will require business plans and funding separate from this plan.
c.	GSL to ask Barton Village Hall for permanent notice board space.						

7. FINANCIAL POSITION

Adequate financial resources underpin the success of any plan. The Group must continue to fund-raise in order to grow and provide the cross-subsidy between sections.

7	Action	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	Resource required / Comment
a.	Treasurer to produce an annual financial forecast			\checkmark			
b.	Encourage parents and friends to sign up to Easy Fundraising	\checkmark		\checkmark	\checkmark		Needs parental support
c.	Continue to apply for gift aid	\checkmark	\checkmark	\checkmark	\checkmark	\checkmark	
d.	Cooperative work to support the sustainability of our Explorer Unit	\checkmark		\checkmark	\checkmark		

WHERE NEXT?

This plan will be presented to the Annual General Meeting in 2018 for approval. If approved, we will start to deliver the actions, bearing in mind that many are interdependent. For example, without more parental support or a few more Leaders there will be limited opportunities for growth.

The Leaders will monitor progress of their elements of the plan and the Executive Committee (if and when formed) will deliver many actions and monitor progress of the entire action plan.