

## **District Lead Volunteer's Report**

I am delighted to report that Scouting in Malling has had another fantastic year. In the census at January 2024, Malling returned over 20% growth in two section age ranges, with a total growth of just under 6% in youth membership overall, bringing the number of young people accessing Scouts in Malling to the biggest it has ever been with over 1100 young people now accessing amazing programmes and adventures. Last year, the county set every district a challenge of growing by over 50 youth members and I'm pleased to say we hit that and exceeded it.

Squirrels, our newest youth section, is still our biggest joining enquiry demand and I'm pleased to say that all being well, by the start of the next academic year we'll have our 5<sup>th</sup> Squirrels drey open which brings us just shy of 50% of our Groups having Squirrels! These young adventurers in their bright red polos and sweatshirts are having a tonne of fun, including several having completed their very first Nights Away experiences with their dreys this year. We want to continue this growth and so we continue to work with Groups to look to create more provision over the course of the next year.

As we move forward with preparation work for Scouts transformation later this year, where we have a new teams based approach to volunteering, I'm pleased to say we've been embedding this culture change and approach in to our District way of working over the last year ready for when it happens. This means our Programme Team have started to deliver fantastic district events including laser tag at Comp Wood, St George's Day at the Friars, the Squirrels get together and a water activities weekend at Bewl Water with even more including a silent disco planned for later this year. Our support team are starting to build and taking on some of the functions from administration to media, campsite support and more and we welcome this team starting to grow. Our Volunteering Development team have continued the challenging process of working within the current rules to onboard new adults, whilst preparing for whats coming soon and doing stringent work in ensuring our compliance with mandatory training for safety and safeguarding is met.

All Groups across the District continue to offer brilliant programmes and activities for young people and and we are working with groups to identify opportunities to grow where there are signs of waiting lists. Some of our Groups are facing some challenges without a lead volunteer, and so we're continuing to work with the Groups, the county Growth and Development officers and others across the District to support and identify teams of people to work together in leadership teams. If anyone is looking for a new and exciting challenge, please do get in touch for a chat.

Our District Explorer provision continues to go from strength to strength with a full programme of activities and events, and demand for places at that level has continued to grow meaning we've had to open a new unit to cope with capacity. It started earlier this year known as the Central ESU, but I feel my inner Eurovision moment here, where we can say its time to 'Rise like a Phoenix', out of the ashes, Phoenix ESU is reborn. The name was chosen by the members of the new unit, once again demonstrating how we continue to ensure youth shaped scouting occurs at all levels. Our Youth Lead and his team ensures that young people get to shape not only the names of units, but also their programmes and activities they take part in every week and makes sure the youth members have their voice heard.

I want to particularly echo my thanks to Ken and the campsite service crew for the fantastic work they put in to keeping our amazing campsite operational and available. Work continues on maximising shared usage of the site and its excellent to keep this brilliant asset available for young people both from within the district but also beyond.

I'd like to say thanks to my entire District Leadership Team, the wider District Teams and the Trustee Board for their support during what has been another busy year.

Finally, I'd like to thank each and every adult volunteer, parent, young person who has been involved with Scouts. You're all fantastic. Remember, we're better off when we achieve together. Scouts really does make an impact and continues to deliver Skills for Life.

**Craig Worcester**  
**District Lead Volunteer**