4th. Epping Forest South (Bancroft’s School) Sea Scout Group

Charity Registration Number 1037676

Minutes of Annual General Meeting held on Wednesday 24th September 2025 and was called to order at 7.33pm (BST)

This meeting took place in the hall at Bancroft’s Preparatory School.

Attendees: Matthew Balchin, John Hasselgren, Paul Still, Beryl Sharm, Ajay Pamneja, Stephen Young, Mel Knight, Duncan Abbot, Colin Wreyford, Michael McGill, Alastair Cochrane, Victoria Cochrane, Michael Dellow, Tetyana Krizieina, Andrew Kirilin

Apologies for absence: Stephen Thirsk

It was noted that Jon Williams resigned from his position as Secretary.

John began by checking that everyone had reviewed the minutes from the last Annual General Meeting, which was held on 25 June 2024. The group accepted that the minutes were a true and accurate account of events for the record.

John then asked if there were any matters arising from the minutes. There were none.

John then moved on to the Chairman’s Report, noting that the group is in good shape with many Scouts involved and a range of activities. He expressed gratitude to the leaders for the amount of work done to keep things running and for helping other groups as well. John made a point of stating that Beryl Sharma is running the Cubs group alone and noted that additional help is urgently required.

John distributed the Rules to accompany the Constitution for this group, noting that changes required by the Scouts Association and Charity Commission are listed in red as proposals to be adopted by the group upon a vote. The required changes are as follows:

- The name of Scout Group Leader to be changed to Group Lead Volunteer, noting that the role is still, ex officio, a Trustee of the Scout Group.
- Trustees must meet at least two times annually, in addition to the Annual General Meeting.
- The Group Trustee Board may meet by video conference or in person, as determined by the Group Chair. However, votes held virtually require 75% majority to be passed.
- The Quora must be: Scout Council meetings (6), Board of Trustees (one third of Trustees). However when held electronically (one third of the Trustees plus one, rounded down). Sub-committees (2)

The group was asked to approve the changes to the Constitution: Passed (unanimously).
Paul Still gave the Treasurer’s report and noted that the annual accounts through 31 March 2025 have been circulated and that there was one query arising from this, which has been replied to in detail. Paul noted that the current bank account is at Barclay’s but that the free 12-month period has expired and the group now must pay a monthly fee to hold the account.

Therefore, Paul is actively looking for a bank account that might offer a free service. All present approved the Treasurer's report and approved the appointment of Steve Fox as the independent examiner. There were no questions.

The Section Reports were given. Stephen Young presented the Group Lead Volunteer report in which he expressed his gratitude to the leaders and wider team for their time and efforts. Main points included the transition to a new IT system was noted along with the successful rollout of a previous action to promote team working. He also thanked Matthew Balchin for submitting a successful application to the RN Scheme, which has provided additional funding to the group this year. It was noted again that the volunteers and leaders should be recognized for the amazing programme they provide. The group agreed and applauded the aforementioned.

Matthew Balchin's report noted a change in site for the summer camp, a successful range of activities over the year, and that the level of Scouts completing their Gold and Silver Awards are roughly unchanged. He expressed a desire for all Scouts to attend the winter camp and hopes this proposed model will help to keep costs lower than they might otherwise have been, while also helping to contribute to Gold Awards. It was also noted that there has been a focus on reintroducing traditional Scout skills, such as building and cooking over open fires as well as chopping wood.

Beryl Sharma gave a report, which noted that activities were down on previous years, mainly due to lack of leaders needed to support. She also noted that the waiting list for Cubs is the lowest it has ever been. Beryl Sharma informed the meeting that she would be resigning as Akela in the Autumn of 2026.. Two leaders are urgently required to take up the positions and it was asked that the group assist with promoting recruitment urgently. Beryl was recognized by the Group for her many years of excellent service.

John then explained that the Trustees are elected for three-year terms, of which they are allowed to be elected for three consecutively before a break of three years is required. John Hasselgren (Chairman) and Paul Still (Treasurer) are in the second year of a current three-year term. There was a vacancy for Secretary to the resignation of Jonathan Williams. Victoria Cochrane was elected as Secretary for the next three-year period. Alastair Cochrane was also elected as a new Trustee. John called for additional volunteers; there were none.

Stephen Young continues as, ex officio, Group Lead Volunteer.

Trustees are John Hasselgren, Victoria Cochrane, Paul Still, Mel Knight, Stephen Young, Duncan Abbot, Beryl Sharma, Matthew Balchin, Ajay Pamneja, and Alastair Cochrane.

AOB:

- Matthew Balchin asked about expenditure of Scout funds on a boat. John Hasselgren responded by calling a Board of Trustees meeting to discuss this topic directly following the AGM. (Minutes recorded separately.)
- Colin Wreyford, District Leader, spoke, thanking leaders for their dedication and extra work. He reported that numbers across Redbridge groups are up 25 per cent and that numbers within 4th Epping Forest South are stable.
- There were no further questions and the meeting closed at 8.30pm (BST).

Victoria Cochrane
Group Secretary, 26/9/2025