Northamptonshire County Scout Council

Finance and General Purposes Committee

Tuesday 7th October 2025 7:30pm

Minutes

Location: Zoom Online

In Attendance:

Samantha Longhurst (Chair)	Attended	Steve Rolt (County Lead Volunteer)	Attended
Judith Hazell	Attended	Dom Winfield (County Treasurer)	Attended
John Rudge	Attended	Anna Swann (County Chair)	Attended
Lee Jones	Apologies	Maxine Brand (County Admin)	Attended
Caleb Newman	Attended		

Item	Item	Action
1	**Welcome** The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting. Dom Winfield, the new County Treasurer, was introduced. Apologies were received from Lee Jones. **Declarations of Interest:** None	
2	**Previous minutes and actions arising**	
2a 2b	The minutes of the previous meeting held on 3rd June 2025 were reviewed and no questions were raised. These are to be signed and uploaded to SharePoint & the County website. **Actions Arising** See separate "Actions Log"	**ACTION: MB**
	Finance	
3	**Review of Risk Register** The updated Risk Register was available to view. **Risk 6 - The SJLC runs at a loss, or forecast to run at loss.** This was reviewed in May. It was agreed to leave this as it is, and to review again once the permanent Centre Manager returns from maternity leave in January. **Risk 20 - Budgetary controls of events are poor thereby potentially leading to significant over & / or under spends that were unexpected by Trustees.** It was agreed that this remains a risk as the administration process is not always being followed. Arran was the last large event, which is an example of this, as the event review has not yet been received. It was agreed to leave the risk as it is, and to review again in December.	

4	**Review of Financial Statements** Xero reports were available to view. An update was given by the County Treasurer.	
4a/4b	**Income & Expenditure Year to Date/Expanded** SJLC income appears slightly ahead of last year from the reports, but expenses are significantly higher, leaving a deficit. It was established however that staffing costs appear higher by 20K, and that this is due to a double counting issue on Xero. The payroll moving to a balance sheet code would address this and the treasurer will investigate this. County is in a surplus position. Other expenses are showing at £9,600 however £5,200 of this was funds paid from Lowther's Knights back to the Centre. There is also a crossover of funds from the County salaries where it has not been allocated.	**ACTION: DW**
4c	**Designated Funds Report** Report available to view. No questions were raised.	
4d	**West Northants Council – Payment Processes** Letter available to view from West Northants Council relating to new ways of payment. It was established that this only relates to our annual booking at The Guildhall and is therefore not of concern.	
4e	**Finance Reporting – Accruals & pre-payments** The County Lead Volunteer proposed that instead of working on income and expenditure as we do currently, we change to accruals and pre-payments. This will enable the trustees to have an accurate picture of the financial situation. The County Treasurer agreed that this is achievable. All agreed that we should move to this system of accounting.	**ACTION: DW**
5	**Financial Approvals**	
5a	**Foul Pump Station at Football Club** – The quote was available to view. This was for information only, for awareness of the potential cost. There are ongoing discussions to resolve liability for repairs.	
5b	**Storm drain repairs** – A quote from Durapump, who we are under contract with, was available to view, however RP has asked for this to be revised due to added costs of the beacons, which should have been replaced when work was carried out previously. Approval was given for work to proceed providing the new quote is £4,500 or less.	**ACTION: CMC (RP)**
5c	**SJLC Pricing 2026/27 –** The proposed pricing was discussed. Concern was raised about the increase in costs for Northants Scouts. A comparison was made with Overstone where the charge for Northants Scouts is £3/pppn for camping – the proposed increase for SJLC is from £3.75 to £4.50/pppn. It was agreed that this was too high. The proposed pricing submitted for activities also recommended an increase for Northants Scouts. Activity hire is currently showing as having reduced, despite investment made, and concern was raised about increasing the cost as this may impact bookings. It was agreed that a small increase to all prices for 2026/27 would be appropriate, but that this should not exceed 5%. SL will review and amend the pricing for circulation to the committee, prior to approval by the CTB.	**ACTION: SL**

5d	**Perimeter Security of SJLC** – A document was available to view detailing options. The committee agreed that fencing may be a deterrent but would not prevent unauthorised access to the site. CCTV has been installed to improve security, and to provide safety for staff. The low fence around the back of the Challenge Course has also been fitted with a Stegastrip topper, at a cost of £250, which was approved by AS. It was agreed that perimeter fencing is not a priority at this time. Planting of hedges may be beneficial. SL will notify CMC (DS) of the decision.	**ACTION: SL**
6 **6a** **6b** **6c**	**Events Reports / Updates** **Somme Trip Request** – The event proposal was available to view, detailing a trip in 2027. The £150 deposit for the event is required by February 2026. This was challenged due to it being early in the year when finances for families may be tight, but this is the latest date to secure the booking. The proposal has the same individual as event treasurer and organiser/administrator, however this must be an independent treasurer, who is approved by SL, SR & AS, as per policy. Approval for this event was given. **Iceland Trip Request** –The proposal for a trip in 2027, open to Explorer Scouts, was discussed. There was some concern about the flights with the number travelling however Explorers would need to travel in groups with different flight options available, and the organiser has been made aware. Some details need to be confirmed, such as who the administrator and treasurer will be for the event, and the adult/Explorer ratio needs to be considered. Approval was given for the event. **Young Leader Proposal 2026** – Following feedback from the previous meeting, an update was given for the budget. As a result, wristband prices have been added. The printing budget was high, and part of this is due to completion certificates. It was discussed that these are used for CV folders, and are therefore valuable to recipients however the recommendation was made that these are provided electronically, rather than incurring unnecessary printing costs.	**APPROVED** **ACTION: JH** **APPROVED** **ACTION: JH**
7	**Northamptonshire Scouts Opportunities Fund** £7.50 was paid retrospectively as the application from the Group had not been received. This was for a Group camp. Authorisation has also been given for £125/pp for 2 siblings to attend a Group event in France in 2026.	
	General Purposes	
8 **8a**	**Update from Centre Management Committee** Minutes from the meeting of 28th August 2025 were available to view, there were no questions raised.	
9	**Update from Amenities Block Working Group** The project needs to proceed, with completion by spring 2026. Funding is required in addition to the £16K that has been set aside for the project. There were some discussions with the High Sheriff and Mayors at the County AGM, and SR has agreed to start a funding application for review at the December meeting. There was a suggestion from one of the mayors that he would recommend all towns in the county donate £500 towards the project to raise the funds required for the project. A letter of thanks for attending the AGM, and support of Northants Scouts, is to be sent.	**ACTION: SR/AS** **ACTION: MB**

	SR proposed that the toilet block is underwritten from the long-term maintenance fund, replacing this with the donation received annually of 3K. There was concern raised about potential liability for the foul pump at the football club, and that £10K had already been pledged from the long-term maintenance fund. This will be considered further at the next meeting.	**ACTION: SR/For review in Dec**
10	**Decisions & Policies Log** **66 Instructor training funded by County and delivered by an external provider** – Agreed, review in 1 year. **73 Volunteers and Staff Expenses Policy**- There have been no changes to the policy. Review in 1 year. **95 Review of Site Fees Sir John Lowther Centre** – Agreed. Review in 1 year. **99 Reserves Policy** – Agreed. Review in 1 year. **113 County Levy** – It was agreed that this would be maintained at £8.65. **130 Use of Reserves – Development Fund** – This was reduced from 10K to 5K. We do not have a new Development Plan, therefore no changes are required. **131 WSJ – Management of WSJ and recommendations for the future** – This needs to be reworded as the budget is for International Fund, 4K of which is for the WSJ.	**ACTION: MB**
11	**Contracts, Insurances & Leases** There were no updates.	
12	**Any Other Business** **Cancellation period at SJLC** – It was raised that the cancellation period for County events is insufficient and the recommendation was made to increase this from 4 to 12 weeks. If a booking is cancelled with less notice, the deposit will be forfeited from the appropriate County annual budget. All agreed that this should be implemented for future bookings, and that consideration should be given to review third party terms. SL to notify DS, CS and the CTB. Booking forms and terms & conditions of hire are to be updated.	**ACTION: SL**
	Future Meeting Dates Tuesday 2nd December 2025 – via Zoom online	
	Close of Meeting 21.20 pm	

These minutes have been approved as an accurate record of the meeting.

pp MUBnf Samantha Longhurst, Chairman Date: 25th March 2026