



District Lead Volunteer's Review of Scouts in The Malvern

Registered Charity number 1030019

April 2024 - March 2025

This year's growth compared to 2024:

Overall District growth	-5.2%
Squirrels	+10.0%
Beavers	-4.9%
Cubs	-9.4%
Scouts	-12.5%
Explorers	+24.3%
Network	-25.0%
Adults	-5.1%
Leader:YP Ratio	+0.7%

The above figures are a mixed bunch with the overall trends being negative but with some positives mixed in. The existing Squirrel Drey at 1st Leigh is continuing to thrive and Explorers are going from strength to strength with their numbers being at the highest we've seen since 2019.

The largest loss, on paper, is in Network however given the very small number of members the 25% loss is due to a single member turning 25.

More worrying is the losses in Scouts and Cubs. The reduction in the Scout section is likely to be a combination of a lot of Scouts reaching 14 and moving to Explorers, as shown by the spike in the Explorer numbers, combined with less moving up from Cubs, which has been shrinking year on year for the past few years. The year on year shrinking of the Cub section was not helped this year by the closing of two Cub packs; one at 2nd Malvern and the other at 1st Malvern Wells. Both these packs closed due to a lack of leaders, rather than a lack of youth members. This point is reinforced by a 110% increase in the number of Cub aged young people on waiting lists across the District.

While the 5.2% decrease in the District is not good, it is indicative of the current youth demographic downturn nationwide. However, despite this there are plenty of opportunities for the District to grow. The District waiting list has grown by 8.2%, which on one hand is really not good as we want all young people who want to join to be able to do so, but also shows that there is unmet demand. The biggest area of this demand is in Squirrels with a 50% increase on last year, taking it to a total of 36 – three Dreys worth of potential.

Some of this demand for Squirrels will be met by a new Drey that is currently being opened at 1st Upton but there is still plenty of demand and potential for other Dreys to be opened at groups across the District.

As a District it is clear that we need more leaders, especially Cub leaders, and our plan is to work with Julie Turbutt, the County Growth & Development Officer, to try and increase our numbers of leaders wherever possible.

The major changes to Scouting that have been in the pipeline for many years, including the new online membership and learning systems, came into effect at the end of November and whilst the changes made will likely help to increase the number of leaders in the movement over the long term, sadly in the short term it has been a clear factor in our number of leaders dropping. We have lost some experienced leaders from across the District who decided that the changes made impacted their role too much to continue. We have also seen resignations & retirements at Warren Oak Campsite and would like to record our gratitude for the years of dedication and time invested by the Site Team.

We have also lost some leaders due to non-compliance with the mandatory safety and safeguarding, made more of an issue since November by the change from having 3 months from joining to complete the training to just 30 days. This will become less of a problem going forwards as it becomes the new normal.

On a more positive note District events within the sections are continuing to happen, with a District Cub Camp and Scout PL&APL day happening a few days after this year's AGM, made possible by the continued hard work of Deb Harrison and Matt Copper, two of our former Assistant District Commissioners.

This year's St Georges Day parade in Priory Park was also well attended and very well organised by 1st Malvern.

Brock, our District Nights Away Assessor and first aid trainer, has continued to help our leaders to gain their camping permits and complete their first aid training, and we thank him for doing so.

Also, a big thank you to Derek Barnes, and the members of The District Trustee Board, for helping to keep the District on the straight & narrow again this year.

It goes without saying that Scouting in The Malverns wouldn't be able to happen without all of our amazing volunteers, no matter what role or roles they have. Ben and Paul would like to thank you all, both past and present members.

Paul Boniface & Ben Johnstone
District Lead Volunteers – Scouts The Malverns