



Scouts

7th Epsom (Methodist)

Five Year Development Plan 2024 - 2028

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#SkillsForLife

Issue: September 2024

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1. About this document

The purpose of this five-year development plan (“The Plan”) is to focus on 7th Epsom Group’s current capabilities as well as its ambitions and what actions are needed that will help achieve them. This new version of the document has detailed revisions as well as new sections added to focus on our current climate of post COVID economics and social commitments. It particularly considers how our regular and occasional adult volunteers can work together to achieve our common goal of ***safely giving our young people fun and challenging experiences that build the best possible skills for life.***

The 7th Epsom Group Executive Committee ‘own’ The Plan and is responsible for reviewing and achieving the actions within it through a standing Agenda item at their quarterly meetings.

> Our vision is highlighted for each element of The Plan.

Associated actions are summarised at the end of the document and take into account the immediate and medium-term challenges and any issues that may affect progress towards the vision. At the Group Scout Council’s AGM, the agreed set of actions for the coming year are presented and progressed through quarterly Group Executive Committee meetings.

2. Background

This Plan was written with ‘normal’ Scouting having returned post the COVID-19 pandemic. However, its legacy still lingers for some young people who were disrupted from social relations with friends and family. The Plan sets our ambitions and goals, along with measurable metrics that are reviewed regularly.

The Scouts Association (TSA) sets the tone for our Scouting activities through its policies and rules (POR) around safety, safeguarding and inclusion, these are underpinned by charity regulations, which we follow as a responsible Scouts Group. We also fundamentally recognise that, as volunteers, we must work in partnership with parents and carers to enhance the Scouting experience for all our members.

Our whole Group is led by volunteers, that’s why we make volunteering easy; it’s team-based and flexible to match skills, interests and availability of our fellow volunteers.

3. About 7th Epsom Group

Our Scout Group is resident at the Epsom Methodist Church (EMC) in the centre of town; we have an illustrious history reaching back to 1927. Since then, we have evolved into a modern and socially responsible Group that offers all young people from six to 18 years of age the opportunity to: *"have fun and develop skills for life by giving them the opportunity to enjoy new adventures, experience outdoors and take part in a range of creative, community and international activities, where they can interact with others, make new friends, gain confidence and have the opportunity to reach their full potential"*.

Our values

Integrity
Respect
Care
Belief
Cooperation

The Constitution defines how 7th Epsom Group works for around 200 young people (members) in Beaver, Cub, Scouts and Explorers Sections and the broad programme we are able offer them is an indication of the capabilities and dedication of our adult volunteers who maintain the health of the Group. Together they provide a rich, varied programme both for the weekly Section meetings and also for the many other Group events and activities defined in this document.

Our Group is a registered charity and relies on its **Trustees** and **Group Executive Committee** for governance so that the Leaders can concentrate on the operational priority of providing a good Scouting experience for our members.

Funding

7th Epsom Group is funded by annual subscriptions and some fundraising activities. Subscriptions cover the cost of belonging to - and being insured by - TSA, the general running costs of providing transport and the costs associated with providing a diverse range of activities at weekly Section meetings. Additional, optional activities and camps are funded by the members who attend them. However, the Group's philosophy is that no young person shall be denied the opportunity to experience Scouting on the grounds of ability to pay, so we maintain a fund to cover a portion of the costs in such cases.

The Executive Committee

The 7th Epsom Group Executive Committee (The Exec) plays a vital role in the sound running of our Scouts Group. Led by our **Group Chair** and supported by the **Secretary** and **Treasurer**, it meets four times a year to carry out administrative tasks, make decisions and to ensure that the best quality Scouting can be delivered to young people in the Group. As a registered charity, the core members of The Exec are the legal Trustees of the Group. The Exec includes **Section Leaders, Parent Representatives** and co-opted positions of **Quartermaster, Transport Manager, Subscriptions Secretary** and **Newsletter Editor**.

- > **Our vision is to have an active and effective Committee Member for each available post and to engage with our members and their parents through an interesting and well attended Annual Review & AGM each year.**

Scout Headquarters

We have a 'Right to Occupy' Agreement with EMC for our modern and well-equipped HQ which is used regularly by all Sections of the Group. It provides a safe and accessible environment for many of the Group's activities. We sometimes use other EMC accommodation where available, and occasionally book additional accommodation elsewhere on a Friday night when the Scout Troop and Explorer Unit both meet.

Building Maintenance

Caretaking and maintenance of the HQ is undertaken by EMC, in return they keep the income from any 3rd party use of the building. This is also covered by our Agreement between 7th Epsom Scout Group and EMC.

- > **Our vision is to provide all Sections and Clubs with access to a well maintained, safe space and the facilities they need for all their activities.**

Equipment

Since the 2019 build of our new stores, we have sufficient on-site storage for our current equipment. All camping and activity equipment is checked, repaired/replaced and maintained as appropriate by **The Quartermaster** who is also responsible for providing an online capability to cover the booking in and out of equipment.

- > **Our vision is to maintain an accessible, well-run quartermaster stores with a sound life cycle of key equipment.**

Transport

We own two minibuses, a box trailer and a canoe trailer. Together, these provide us with enough autonomy to support our range of activities and camps. These are maintained and made accessible for use and loan by **The Transport Manager**.

- > **Our vision is to have a safe and effective fleet of vehicles that are regularly maintained and replaced, and a pool of drivers that are suitably qualified and regularly retested. We set aside funds each year that enable timely replacement of our vehicles.**

Uniform Exchange

We operate a Uniform Exchange scheme to provide a cost-effective way of providing uniform as the young people grow and move through each Section. Each Leader can access the Exchange and ensures it is used and run effectively.



- > **Our vision is that the Group uniform stock is well managed and meets the needs of our members.**

Inclusivity and Special Needs

The Group welcomes everyone, irrespective of their capacity or ability and we endeavour to make reasonable adjustments to enable young people with additional needs to be involved in our Scouting activities.

We currently have members with a variety of special needs. Because of the size of the Group, we are able to integrate them successfully into our Scouting activities.

- > **Our vision is to continue provision for special needs in keeping with best practice.**

4. Fundraising

We cannot achieve all our objectives solely through annual subscriptions so we have annual and occasional ad-hoc fundraising events to provide supplementary funds to cover specific occasional activities and purchases of large items of kit. We also want to ensure we have sufficient reserves to support special events like International Trips.

Christmas Post

The Group runs a Local Community Christmas Post scheme that provides a well-respected service and publicises Scouting in the community as well as being an important fundraiser for the Group. We encourage all our member's families to participate in using and helping to deliver our postal service.

- > **Our vision whilst a reasonable demand for the service exists, is to continue to run a reliable, quality service for our local community and to seek ways to increase the items delivered year on year.**

Fireworks

The Epsom Fireworks Organisation was formed in 2019 and took over management of the Annual Display and Funfair which 7th Epsom had run from 1971 to 2018. 7th Epsom remains one of the local Scout Groups who support the organisation and running of the event in return for a share of the proceeds.

- > **Our vision is to continue to provide support to the event and use it to promote our other Scouting activities.**

Social Events

The Group runs occasional 'social' events (quiz nights, barbecues, casino nights and family events). They are often linked to special fundraising needs for supporting camps and expeditions.

- > **Our vision is to build on our successful quiz night and family day and establish them as popular well-run and well-attended social events.**

5. Uniformed Sections

Beavers

We currently run three colonies that meet weekly either on Monday, Tuesday or Thursday with a maximum number limited to 24 Beavers in each colony. At present we do not actively recruit as our waiting list provides sufficient young people to keep the three colonies full.

Cubs

We currently run three packs that meet weekly either on Monday, Tuesday or Thursday with a maximum number of 24 Cubs in each pack. We do not actively recruit as our reputation and Beavers moving up provides sufficient young people to keep the three packs full.

- > **Our vision is to have two uniformed leaders, additional adult helpers and at least one Young Leader so that each junior Section can continue to provide a rich, interesting and active programme of activities on a weekly basis.**

Scouts

We currently run one large troop that meets weekly on a Friday evening. Most weeks it splits into 'a trio' of groups each of two or three patrols. The programme is repeated over three weeks so that each group gets the same programme opportunities over the 'trio'.

- > **Our vision is to have six uniformed leaders (two for each trio), with sufficient additional adult helpers and suitably qualified Instructors each week to continue to provide an interesting and varied programme of activities on a weekly basis.**

Explorers

Our Explorer Section has members from around the Epsom and Ewell District but primarily from 7th Epsom Scout Group. We encourage members to take some control of their activity programme which includes a wide range of activities including supporting other charities and community projects.

Our Explorers are encouraged to take part in helping with Group Social Events like quizzes. They provide assistance in the kitchen, with marking and scoring, and also in organising a raffle in aid of their chosen charity.

- > **Our vision is to have sufficient uniformed leaders, additional adult helpers and suitably qualified instructors to enable weekly meetings for all Explorers.**

Young Leaders

Explorers from the age of 14 are actively encouraged to support our six junior Sections to provide leading experience, to develop life skills and confidence.

District-provided training includes one mandatory module, which covers essentials such as safeguarding (what to do if they have a concern) and the expectation of their supporting role. Further modules are optional to extend their understanding of developing and leading a safe and diverse programme, and also include first-aid, communication skills and understanding behaviours.

Young Leaders are given a log book for evidence and are encouraged to contribute activity ideas and provide mentor support for the young people. All are useful life skills which are an especially valuable foundation for future Leaders.

- > **Our vision is to continue to encourage our Young Leaders to volunteer, inspire younger people, support each other and undertake training provided by District.**

Network Scouts

Scout Network is the fifth and final section of the Scouting movement.

Scout Network members take part in a variety of activities, which they undertake and organise themselves with the support of a Scout Network Leader.

Example activities include abseiling, camping, circus skills, climbing, go-karting, gorge walking, hiking, pioneering and water sports.

- > **Our vision is to encourage our older Explorers to remain connected with and involved in the Scouting movement, including attending meetings and undertaking training provided by District.**

6. Leader Recruitment, Retention & Succession Planning

We need to constantly recruit new Assistant Leaders as our existing Leaders move on or retire. Ideally each junior Section will have a Leader and an Assistant; whereas senior Sections each need at least four Leaders every week. More Leaders means the load can be shared, especially when organising camps and other special activities. Similarly, we need volunteers to maintain the elected and co-opted positions that contribute to a balanced Executive Committee.

- > **Our vision is to have continual Leader recruitment as well as specific campaigns to meet urgent needs; this recruitment is supported by mentoring for new Leaders, regular reviews with each individual and succession planning to try to ensure that there is 'someone in the wings' for every Section.**

7. Leader Training

Training is an essential part of being an Assistant/Leader or Skill Instructor. Currently we have no designated trainer/mentor although experienced 'Scouters' are always available to advise and support new Leaders. TSA organise a number of Skill Courses which the Group will fund our Leaders/Instructors attending.

- > **Our vision is for a Training Advisor available to every Leader and adult helper who can guide on relevant TSA training and to provide quality training whenever it is required for basic and specialist skills.**

8. Specialist Activities and Clubs

Amateur Radio (Radio Society of Great Britain registered)

We have our own equipment and 'shack' in the HQ where we operate an RSGB amateur radio club (call sign M0ESG). Although this has run for many years, it relies on external Amateur Radio enthusiasts and is currently dormant. However, we still endeavour to participate in the annual Jamboree on the Air (JOTA) in October. which connects with Scouts across the world.

- > **Our vision is to recruit enthusiasts who can run regular practice sessions so that more Members are introduced to this popular technical hobby which significantly predates modern social media communications.**

Archery

Although we currently have no qualified archery Instructors, we own our own equipment and have an archery range in our HQ which enables us to engage with regional Instructors can provide experience of the sport for our members.

- > **Our vision is to recruit and train our own Instructors who can run regular practice sessions so that more members are introduced to the sport.**

Climbing & Bouldering

We have qualified Instructors, our own equipment and both covered outdoor climbing and bouldering walls at our HQ which is regularly used by all Sections of the Group.

- > **Our vision is to expand the challenge and utilisation of our walls. We want to hold regular practice sessions so that more members can be introduced to the sport and need more adult volunteers who can be trained and assessed as Instructors.**

Hill walking

We have qualified Instructors and considerable experience of hill walking in the UK and abroad. We host the Surrey Scout and Guide Mountaineering Club ([SSGMC](#)) is a club for people in the Scouting and Guiding movement who are interested in mountaineering and hillwalking. The Club offers opportunities for Leaders and helpers to have weekends away, walking in the mountains with other adult Leaders.



- > **Our vision is to continue to provide hill walking opportunities (e.g. Easter Ex) and use our accommodation for training and sharing of hill walking experiences through SSGMC.**

Shooting Club

Shooting is not regularly offered due to a lack of qualified Instructors. However, we have access to external qualified shooting Instructors who can utilise our indoor shooting range for air pistol instruction and practice activities which our senior Sections can integrate into their programmes.

- > **Our vision is to provide regular instruction and practice sessions for Scouts and Explorers so that more members are introduced to the sport.**

Sporting competitions

We typically enter annual District competitions for sporting activities like football, cross-country running, pioneering and swimming. We pride ourselves on taking part and providing a fun and competitive environment.

- > **Our vision is to encourage participation in team and individual events offered by District Scouts.**

Water activities

Most of our water activities take place at our annual Water Weekend Camp which is well-established at the Thames Young Mariners site located between Richmond and Kingston. These weekend camps offer several experiences:

a. Kayaking and Canoeing

We have qualified Instructors and our own kayaks and equipment. We typically include kayaking and canoeing in our Water Weekend. Kayaking is sometimes programmed at other points during the year too.

b. Sailing

Although we currently have no qualified sailing Instructors or equipment, we do use the facilities of the Thames Young Mariners when we run our Water Weekend camp.

c. Rafting

We have a few qualified rafting Instructors and our own equipment and Thames Young Mariners include the experience in our annual Water Weekend Camp.

d. Swimming

Although we currently have no qualified lifesavers, we take part in the annual District swimming gala, and, as part of other camps near the coast, often include swimming activities where qualified lifesavers are present.

- > Our vision is to ensure we maintain and store equipment to provide opportunities for more members to have the opportunity to enjoy water activities. Also to train more adults to become qualified Instructors and lifesavers so that more water activities. can be programmed and included on camps.**

9. Group Programme

In the UK

We have a number of Group events including the following annual camps:

- **Easter Expedition** for Explorers and older Scouts, a four-day expedition to a mountainous area, sometimes camping and sometimes in overnight accommodation.
- **Spring camp** at the end of May is open for all Beaver, Cubs, Scouts and Explorers to attend
- **Summer camp** at the end of July for Scouts and Explorers
- **Water weekend** in September for Cubs (day), Scouts and Explorers.



In addition, we attend **ScoutAbout** which is a triennial event for all Surrey Scouts.

- > **Our vision is to continue to offer these activities on an annual basis, providing a challenging and enjoyable experience to a greater number of individuals.**

International

Scouting is an international movement and a visit abroad is a fantastic opportunity to learn about another culture, meet other Scouts, understand how they live, experience unique adventures and extend the horizons of our members beyond where we live. We have historically linked with European (Swedish and Czech Republic) and African (Uganda, Tanzania and Madagascan) Scouts. These links have provided opportunities to camp with the Scouts in their countries once every few years and we have also invited the Swedish Scouts to camp in the UK. However, all these events rely heavily on the availability of adult Leaders and helpers to enable these activities to be programmed.

- > **Our vision is to encourage more volunteers to support our International Scouting programme so that we can offer at least one international visit in every older Scout / Explorer career.**

10. Communications and PR

7th Epsom News

We produce a digital newsletter several times each year. These are produced by **The Newsletter Editor** and circulated electronically via our website. This is our main channel for communicating recent and forthcoming events both with parents and to the wider community.

Web site

Our Group's website (<https://www.7thepsom.org.uk>) is primarily aimed at informing the public as well as current and prospective members of our structure, ongoing activities and annual highlights. It also provides the public with a communication channel to the Group through links to relevant information and contacts.

- > **Our vision is to focus on providing quality and engaging online content for our Group and especially the wider community who wish to know more about 7th Epsom.**

Social Media

We use social media for some of our communications. We recognise that General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) defines that the age of consent as 16 and so encourage/allow Explorer age members to seek parental permission to use 7thepsom_explorers as a way of keeping up to date with the Section activities.

- > **Our vision is to appropriately use social media to communicate with parents and our community.**

11. Celebrating Our Centenary

2027 sees the centenary of 7th Epsom Scouts which we believe is an achievement worth celebrating. We are working towards making the year a memorable one in terms of the activities and events we host and share with our supporters.



- > **Our vision is to have a number of significant events; within Section programmes and at special events which will involve parent/carers and our local community.**

12. Parade Service

We strongly encourage all our members to attend the remembrance service at EMC or at their own church as appropriate. It's a moment for us to reflect on the sacrifices made, to learn from history and most importantly, to remember those who gave their lives.



13. Recruitment in the Community

The Group is situated in Town Ward which has one of the highest concentrations of ethnic minority groups in Surrey, although this is not reflected in the current membership of the Group. We currently have an oversubscribed waiting list and don't need a proactive recruitment drive as our numbers are limited by the amount of adult help available.

- > **Our vision is to maintain the capacity of our Group whilst offering good quality Scouting to our young people and to encourage a more diverse membership that reflects our local community.**

14. Action Plan (Review at Trustee, Executive Meetings & AGM)

#	Description	Responsible	When	Comment
1.	Update and adopt our Group Constitution	Group Exec	2024 AGM	Can be accessed here
2.	Secure a Group Scout Leader.	DC + Group Chair	ASAP	Could be a shared role
3.	Ensure Assistant/Leader recruitment and succession planning is sound. Ask all Section Leaders to identify successor.	All section Leaders and GSL	Ongoing	ALs currently needed for: Willowlake, Windfall & Sioux
4.	Secure Parent Reps for each Section, ensure role is understood and developed in line with needs of Section.	Section Leaders	ASAP	Currently needed for: Willowlake, Windfall & Cherokee
5.	Streamline Leader mentoring, Training & Validation. a) Basic training b) Specialist training c) Skills training	Mentoring: VACANT Training: LH	Ongoing	Have nominated mentors for junior & senior Sections
6.	Recruit & Train Instructors where we have few / none to ensure continuity of a widely varied programme.	All	Ongoing	For archery, shooting, sailing, amateur radio, etc.
7.	Form Sub-Committee to plan our Centenary activities and celebrations.	Organising Sub-Committee	2024-27	Inaugural meeting planned for winter '24
8.	Develop and implement a plan for ongoing engagement with departing Explorers.	Exec + Expl'r leaders	Ongoing from 2025	As future supporters and leadership
9.	Ensure we run an effective ongoing training regime for addressing special needs.	Exec	ASAP	To meet evolving needs
10.	Strive to increase progressive parent engagement and to identify key skills specific parents can contribute.	SLs/Exec	Ongoing	Both activity and executive management skills needed
11.	Recruit an additional Exec Team Member to handle communications for local community & on premises	SLs/Exec	ASAP	Aimed at Improving PR