

GIRLGUIDING LEEDS
MINUTES OF ANNUAL VIRTUAL GENERAL MEETING
THURSDAY 12TH MAY 2022

The meeting took place via Zoom, approximately 14 people were in attendance and were briefed on how to comment and/or ask questions etc. using the Zoom facilities.

County President Lynne Reid opened the meeting by welcoming everyone to this, the third Zoom AGM meeting. Lynne particularly wanted to extend a warm welcome to Sarah, our newly appointed, Assistant County Commissioner. Lynne provided us with her thoughts on 2021.

“In Spring or Summer 2021 many of our units, quite literally, ditched virtual meetings and held outdoor meetings. Whether this was outside usual meeting places, on fields, grassed areas nearby or in parks. Wasn't it just brilliant?! I don't know about you but I felt a tad apprehensive too as that first night we saw our girls' face to face some of them had joined the unit during virtual meetings and had only seen our faces on zoom. Of course this is Guiding and our girls' always rise to challenges, whatever their age.

We talk about “mountain top” moments in Guiding and I have been fortunate to experience some of these with Guiding friends. As many of you know I do Rainbows and Brownies and seeing those little faces at our first outdoor meeting has got to be right up there. The excitement was palpable. Our unit teams and I went home buzzing, elated and on cloud nine. I'm sure we weren't the only ones judging by the emails received from parents. It was most definitely worth doing the pages and pages of the outdoor risk assessments! I'd like to extend a huge well done and many thanks to all our Division Commissioners for undertaking the immense task of approving them all. As leaders we sometimes can tend to forget that Commissioners are volunteers too.

A massive thank you to Louise for steering our County not only through the past year but since 2019. It has been a challenging journey.

September saw many of us going back into our halls which felt quite strange after some 18 months away. Thankfully it was another step towards normality, long may it continue”.

The annual report was given by County Commissioner **Louise Flynn**, presented in a slide show on screen with narrative from Louise.

Slide 1 Welcome to our review of 2021. This year, 2021, came with its own difficulties and challenges. We have decided that this year we will present a Year in photographs.

Slide 2 The County Commissioner Winter and Spring Challenges encouraged all ages to take part in themed activities. Units from across the County posted photos on Facebook, and the Pinterest site was popular for those volunteers with limited time to go searching for templates for the activities.

Slide 3 Our Science from your Sofa week, held during British Science Week in March was another fantastic success. We held live interviews with a panel of scientists - drawn from our volunteers, and their colleagues and friends. We also managed to run a mini professors workshop!

Slide 4 March was an extremely busy month, as we also held our first Virtual County Training Day where we were joined by 3 other Counties from around the region. Of the 185

participants 104 of them were from Leeds. An amazing turnout and one that allowed trainers from around the Country to be involved with.

Slide 5 Guiding has definitely been different again in 2021 but we have still found time to celebrate our success. 24 adults achieved their leadership qualification or additional modules, 2 GAW qualifications and one commonwealth award were awarded. Our young members were also working hard with 33 Rainbow, 56 Brownie and 21 gold awards being presented.

We gave out numerous long service awards which totalled a further 500+ years of service between them.

Slide 6 & 7 - We had one very special presentation which was made to Judith Emsley who had completed 60 years of service to guiding an outstanding achievement. We celebrated in style by holding a surprise presentation, under the disguise of the County President inviting the vice presidents to a Zoom afternoon tea.

Slide 8 In May we launched our weekly Thank you shout outs, thanks to our newly appointed Social Media Team. Our posts have certainly become much more professional since they came on board, and I personally would like to thank Liisa for all of her help and support in designing badges, and making things look pretty! The weekly shout outs are an opportunity for anyone to be recognised by others for the big or small things that they do to help. Having been nominated for shout it, it definitely gives you a boost.

Slide 9 Following the resignations of Andrea Simon and Janet Marsden as Assistant County Commissioner, we took the opportunity to reshape the County Teams. We have established an Adventure & Events team which are being led by Claire Kilburn and Natacha Killen. Who are working in the background to bring you some fabulous events, including a County Camp for 2023, and have started developing the Adventures in a box activities that can be borrowed for use in your units.

Slide 10 The Membership Development Team was created, with a number of sub teams sitting under this, including the Warm Welcome, Wider Opportunities, Leadership Qualification and most importantly valuing members and recruitment and Raising Awareness teams. There is some great work going on in the back ground to support our members

Slide 11 Following on from Lynne's introduction, during the summer lots of socially distanced activities were held in units across the majority of the County. Including the first of what I am sure will be many unit trips out - but the first for Crown Park Division was to Waddow.

Slide 12 Although Robin Hole Campsite & Hostel and The Trefoil Centre have been closed for much of 2021, there has still been a team of volunteers who have maintained them - thank you.

Slides 13 - 17 A lot of volunteer effort has gone into Robin Hole since July 2021. Our thanks must go to Audrey Morrall and her team of volunteers for all of their hard work and commitment to getting the building and grounds ready to welcome visitors again. The house has been transformed inside, and the new kitchen is fabulous, and the grounds are starting to look amazing. Thank you to everyone who has helped out with all of the Tidying and Cleaning Days.

Slide 18 In September we launched our county merchandise and held our first out and about week. A week where we encouraged all units to be out in their local area and be seen in uniform. The County notebooks and pens have proven to be very popular and we are starting to see more of our volunteers wearing the County Hoodie supporting the strapline "We are Girlguiding Leeds" helping to bring us together as a unified County.

Slide 19 October brought us our County Drop in Weekend at Shine in Harehills. A great weekend of training, crafting, well-being sessions and the opportunity for everyone to come along and meet the County Teams, and generally have a catch up face to face. The feedback has been excellent and it is something that we will definitely consider again.

Slide 20 October also introduced our newest County Vice President Karen Whitelaw, having just completed her term of office as Division Commissioner for Tarnheights, Karen was a perfect candidate to join our Vice President Team with her wealth of knowledge for all things girlguiding.

Slide 21 In November the extended County Team from around the County came together at a County Development Day to review the County Strategy, and put a 12 month action plan in place. This was an opportunity for quite a lot of the teams to be face to face for the first time.

Slide 22 We also introduced Isabelle and Sarah into the County office in November, as Davina left us to take up the NEE Region Manager's role. The office had be moved into the old boardroom and now makes for a fantastic working environment for them.

Slide 23 We also presented Girlguiding newest award - the Hero Awards to 16 volunteers across the County, with many more to come. Congratulations to all of our Division Commissioners who had done a sterling job of reviewing and approving risk assessments to get units back to face to face meetings. I am sure that you will all join me in giving them a round of applause.

Slide 24 Review of financial activities

We are grateful to those who have donated this year including The Brotherton Trust. Grants in respect of Covid-19 were received from Bradford City Council for the closure of Robin Hole Campsite and Hostel. A full list of all donations and grants received can be found in the notes to the accounts.

Slide 25 Membership Numbers Comparison

Girlguiding Leeds County is heavily reliant on its main income from membership subscriptions. All membership subscriptions were received for 2021, although our numbers had reduced considerably. Membership is starting to increase again, however we are still quite a way from our pre pandemic membership numbers. The cost of county subscription levy remained static at £3.95 for 2021, with an increase agreed for the next two years to £5.25 per member. Therefore, overall income in that respect showed a decrease of £10,136 or 24% in 2021.

Slide 26 Due to the pandemic no county face to face events took place this year, although we were able to offer County Commissioner Challenge badges to support units in delivering a varied programme, and a virtual event called Science from your Sofa which proved to be extremely popular during British Science week.

We cannot ignore the impact that Covid19 has had on Leeds County Guide Association and we are all disappointed that activities, trips, camps etc. have all had to be curtailed and cancelled. This of course has meant that income levels in the current year are reduced although all available grants and reliefs have been claimed.

There has been lots of work undertaken at Robin Hole. The installation of the new stainless steel kitchen commenced during 2021, with monies being used from the Legacy Fund to support this work. There remains one further payment to be made which has been held back for defects with the new sinks.

The building has been redecorated throughout, and there has been work completed as recommended by the new Fire Risk Assessment that has been undertaken - there are now viewing panes in the fire doors, and a new fire shutter in the kitchen. The Bradford City Council Grants have been used for the majority of this work.

We have invested in new blinds throughout, removed rubbish that had accumulated on site - via a number of skips and volunteer days to load them. Replaced all the fire equipment that was out of date. We have made a big investment to Robin Hole during the course of 2021, however the work that has been undertaken is what we will now schedule into cyclical maintenance routine for the property.

The former boardroom at the Trefoil Centre has been converted to an office, with built in storage which has created a much needed fit for purpose office working environment. Our thanks go to Davina and Rob Scholefield for their design input and layout drawing.

During 2021 our paid Administrator resigned from the role to take up the North East England Region Managers position. We have subsequently employed two part time Administrators who, between them, work 28 hours per week for 46 weeks per year. This provides us with an increase of eight hours administration support per week.

As interest rates remain unattractive the challenge to place funds in safe accounts which pay a reasonable amount of interest has become much harder. The account with Cambridge and Counties Building Society continues to pay interest and the Redwood Bank account does the same, however they now yield lower rates of interest due to the pandemic.

Nonetheless, Leeds County Guide Association remains in sound financial shape. The Finance Committee and ultimately the Trustees remain conscious of the need to operate effectively and efficiently to both enhance the funds and more importantly to use and allocate them to progress the aims and objectives of Leeds County Guide Association.

Slide 27 - So what next?

Slide 28 Throughout 2021 we've kept the spirit of guiding alive in Leeds, had fun, earned badges and celebrated our success. None of this would have been possible without our amazing volunteers - Thank you!

The meeting was closed by County President Lynne Reid. "Thank you for joining us this evening and thank you to everyone, whatever your role, for all you have done over the last year.

I was recently privileged to be invited to the Region Trefoil Guild AGM at the Carriage Works here in Leeds. It was so wonderful to be in a room full of people and to see so many familiar faces not seen for so very long, other than some of them on zoom. Long may this continue and we can look forward to seeing each other in person more often".

The meeting closed at 8pm.