1st Tolworth (St Matthew's) Scout Group

FOUNDED 1908

REGISTERED 5TH MARCH 1909

Sparks Hall, Pyne Road, Tolworth, KT6 7BN



Registered Charity Number: 1040958

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Group Chair	Martin Smith	chair1sttolworthscouts@btinternet.com
Secretary	Gayna Brice	1sttolworthfundraising@gmail.com
Group President	Margaret Warry	margaret.warry@blueyonder.co.uk
Group Vice President	Graham Warnes	graham.warnes@blueyonder.co.uk
Circle Chair	Margaret Warry	margaret.warry@blueyonder.co.uk

Diary of Events

May

Tue 7th 20.00 for 20.15 - Group Trustee Board meeting - Sparks Hall

Thu 16th Circle Meeting - Visit to Boxhill for a light lunch and afternoon cream tea. Leaving at noon

June

Tue 4th	20.00 - Group AGM - Sparks Hall - All welcome
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Thu 20th Circle Meeting - Shopping with lunch at a Garden Centre

July

Tue 2nd 20.00 for 20.15 - Group Trustee Board meeting - Sparks Hall

Sat 27th Scout summer camp,

All contributions for the July issue of OOTB to be delivered to Gayna by 20 June 2024

GSL'S REPORT

I started last year's report by saying that everyone was shocked with the news of Russia invading Ukraine, who would have expected that a year on the war is still going! I don't think any of us would have expected this to happen and that there is now a war between Israel and Hamas in Gazza!

Let's all hope and pray this ends soon.

1st Tolworth has been busy as usual! We have had some changes within the Group in that we now have a new Beaver Leader. Michelle Nicholls who took over from Courtney, who due to family and work commitments stepped down last summer and along with Peter Keen are running a very successful Beaver Colony. Michelle and Peter are doing a fantastic job and running a brilliant program for the young people to get their badges.

The Beaver colony has really grown so much that we now have a waiting list! If you would like to help on the parent rota, please speak to Michelle or Peter or email beavers@1sttolworthscouts.org.uk sometimes due to work Michelle can't be there so parent help is essential.

Last year I started the cub report by saying goodbye to Megan, this year I have to start it by saying goodbye to Luke and Marina. Luke and Marina are in the process of finding a house as they are planning to get married soon, but with local house prices this may not be in this area. I have to say a massive thankyou to them both for holding the fort and keeping the Cub Pack running and giving up so much to help.

Caroline, our Scout Leader, has stepped in to help me run the Cub Pack. The pack has also benefited from a new Young Leader Oliver, joining from Atlas ESU and with Matthew they make a brilliant team! I need to say a massive thankyou to the parents who have agreed to be part of the parent help group and come down on a Wednesday.

My goal now is to find someone who is willing to join the leadership team to help run the Cubs. If you think this is something you might like to do, please let me know. We do have a little room in the pack so if you know of anybody who would like to join, just let me know.

The Scout Troop as ever is going strong! Caroline and her team are doing a fantastic job and providing a brilliant program of activities and camps. They have been very busy over the past year, but I will let Caroline tell you all about it!

Last year scouting announced that there were going to be some changes in the way we volunteer and with our roles also how the Executive Committee will change and be known as the "Trustee Board." January saw the start of these changes. None of the changes will affect the way we deliver scouting or affect you as parents or young people directly. One of the key changes is that they are changing our role names, i.e. my role as GSL (Group Scout Leader) will now be known as Lead Volunteer 1st Tolworth (St Matthews), the section leaders will become, Team Leader Scouts, or Cubs or Beavers. Assistant Section Leader roles like Peters or all the other leaders in the scout section will be, Team Member Scouts... etc.

The reason for these changes is that the association thinks that it will be easier for people to understand what our roles are and also, they are now structuring everything around a "Teams" basis as most people are used to this at work. This is happening throughout scouting so the County Commissioner will now be "Lead Volunteer" and the District Commissioner will be "Lead Volunteer Royal Kingston." As you might guess this has not gone down too well! If as HQ says this will want to make people volunteer more to join then PLEASE let me know! Your opinion would also be interesting.

John Bowman Group Scout Leader gsl@1sttolworthscouts.org.uk

GROUP CHAIR'S REPORT

I would like to start my report as always by inviting all Members, Families and Supporters to the 1st Tolworth (St. Matthew's) Scout Group Annual General Meeting; to be held at Sparks Hall on Tuesday 4th June 2024 The Meeting Agenda is on the last page of this edition.

As last year we will be adopting (or re-adopting) the 1st Tolworth (St. Matthew's) Scout Group Constitution. The Constitution, as the name suggests, is the charter the Scout Group adopts when delivering Scouting for 1st Tolworth (St. Matthew's) and can be found on our website, <u>https://1sttolworthscouts.org.uk/1st-tolworth-st-matthews-scout-group-constitution/</u>

Attendees at the Annual General Meeting, make up what is known as the Group Scout Council, vote on the adoption of the constitution and acceptance of the nominated, Chair, Treasurer, Secretary and other Trustee members to the Group Scout Board of Trustees, so as parents, supporters and Leaders, attending the AGM is quite an important role.

Some of the existing titles and roles within Scouting are changing and may take some time to sink in. Just for clarity the Board of Trustees is the newly imposed title of what we all knew as the Group Executive Committee. Other changes are detailed in the GSL's report. If anyone is considering volunteering to become a member of the Board of Trustees please could you let me know by e-mail before the 21st May 2024.

chair1sttolworthscouts@btinternet.com

Please do come along to the AGM and join us, it would be great to see as many of you as possible. The meeting will start at 8pm and again we have the opportunity to reflect on the previous year's activities. The formal meeting is usually a reasonably short affair; refreshments, Drinks and Nibbles will be available following the meeting. Please use this opportunity to raise any concerns you may have regarding the way the Scout Group is managed. Or just come along for a chat, it would be great to see you there. The proposed agenda for the meeting can be seen on page 14

This report as always will be a review of the last year.

During the summer 2023 break our normal building hall checks were carried out, any maintenance issues dealt with and the hall made ready for the return to Scouting.

It's hard to believe that the Hall is nearly 30 years old and although in good condition, will in the next couple of years need some serious maintenance. Not a surprise but something to be aware of. First thing on the list is the roof, it is in need of some attention, as stated this is a maintenance issue and not a safety issue, basically the roof is starting to leak a bit.

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This is something that is on our long term plans and is not a surprise. We have engaged with a surveyor and hopefully we can come up with a solution that is cost effective. We have also been experiencing some bird ingress into the roof space and this will be looked at also.

In October we said goodbye to Reverend Helen Hancock, Helen had been the Vicar at St Matthew's for just over 10 Years and supported the Scout group on many occasions.

On behalf of the Group I attended her last Service which was held on 1st October.

Following the service I presented Helen with a certificate of thanks. In recognition for the support she had given 1st Tolworth (St. Matthew's) Scout Group

I also presented Helen and her husband Simon with a "With Thanks" Scout pin badge each.

The Remembrance Service at Surbiton War Memorial was well attended and it was great to see so many youth group members attending including members from 1st Tolworth all looking really smart. The group Wreath which in the past has been laid at the Polyapes Memorial was again this year laid at the Surbiton Memorial. The honour of laying the 1st Tolworth group Wreath went to Josh Nicholls.

Again we were fortunate to be able to hold the Group November Fayre at the Surbiton Royal British Legion and again we used the bar area which proved to be so successful the previous three years. We were fortunate to have the Mayor of the Royal Borough of Kingston upon Thames, Councillor Diane White, she and her Consort, Mr Jonathan White were escorted around the Fayre by John Bowman they both enjoyed their time at the fayre chatting to almost everyone and playing some of the tombola's before they left.

As always a big thank you to everyone who helped out with running a stall, setting up and all those important unseen jobs that need doing before, on and after the event. It really was a smooth operation on the day, so thank you all.

Thanks to Lee Perkins for running the door and being the occasional compare.

A big thank you to Ted Hodges for organising the raffle. Also a special thanks to the Fayre Coordination Team, Gayna Brice, Fiona Perkins, Brenda Pawley and Terry Goodall for all the hard work during the year in organising this special day. Without their hard work this event would not happen.

In March we announced that from September 2024 the Monthly subs will increase to £12.50. This was not something we did lightly, as with all clubs and associations running costs have risen over the years, we have not been exempt from increasing costs, and although we have managed to carry on absorbing these additional costs, with no increase to our Subs since April 2014 it was decided that a small increase would be necessary.

Again this year we have had some changes and challenges with leadership in the Cubs and Beavers, full details can be seen in John's GSL report.

On March 5th 2024 the Group celebrated its 115th year since being founded. Without the Volunteers past and present who take on the roles as Group Scout Leader, Beaver, Cub and Scout Leaders, Assistant Leaders, Young Leaders or Executive Committee members none of those 115 years would have been possible. Thank you all.

I would like to thank the Group Executive members, "Opps" Board of Trustee members, for their support during the last year and look forward to their continued support in the next. So I would like to take this opportunity on behalf of everyone in the 1st Tolworth family to thank them for their support.

Terry, our treasurer, is continuing to do a fantastic job and I thank him for all his time and efforts in managing the Groups finances.

And a big thank you to my wife, Viv, as without her continuous support and understanding I could not fulfil my role as Group Chair.

As can be seen in John's report, titles and roles are changing, the role of a Trustee will differ from that of an Executive committee member, but this will not immediately affect how we do things, changes are inevitable and will come into effect gradually.

I hope to see you at the Group's Annual General Meeting Tuesday 4th June 2024 8pm Start...

I am so proud to be part of 1st Tolworth (St. Matthew's) Scout Group.

Proud to be 1st Martin Smith Group Chair chair1sttolworthscouts@btinternet.com

PRESIDENTS REPORT

Looking back over 2023/24, one thing in particular has struck me. Every one of our Sections has devoted a lot of time to preparing and eating food.

When my son, Paul, (you may remember he was Scout Leader for a while), arrived at Essex University student residence he found that his fellow scholars had not been Scouts, neither had they learned to prepare any meals at home! So the first weeks were spent showing the rest how to cook, wash up etc. No one knew how to work the washing machine either something Paul had had to do at home.

In Scouting, we talk about learning Skills for Life and it is clear our young people are not going to waste money buying take-away meals.

This year, our 115th, has been packed with activities. As a result none had time to join a gang and walk the streets. All Sections are flourishing and I am confident we will continue to attract new members and new leaders.

My best wishes to you all. See you at the AGM and come and practise your eating skills!

Margaret Warry Group President

Treasurer's Report

A warm welcome to our AGM for 1st Tolworth (St Matthews) Scout Group. The accounts for the period from the 1st April 2023 to the 31st March 2024 have been checked and approved by our auditor. Unfortunately Maurice Grant our nominated auditor was unable to perform the task this year due to failing eyesight. We were fortunate to be able to enlist the services of Mr. Trevor Strong a long-time supporter of 1st Tolworth and former Royal Kingston Scout District Chair. I would like to take this opportunity to thank Maurice who has been the Group auditor for over 30 Years. Once again and on behalf of the group many thanks to Maurice for his support.

I would have completed 15 years this evening in the role as Treasurer considering I thought I would only be in this position for about 10 years but I am still here. Don't get me wrong, I have enjoyed the challenge over the years and have done my best to keep our accounts in order. The worrying thought is there is no one on the horizon who would take on my position. I live in hope that new blood will appear as I cannot see myself continuing for another 5 years. Let's face it, I cannot go on indefinitely.

Our accounts for the past 12 months show a healthy balance with backup reserves and 'pots' for building, training, vehicle hire etc. We seem to be holding our own despite our fundraising being significantly reduced over the past few years. I calculate the Group is between £3000 to £4000 less to what we received 4 years ago from fundraising. In the coming months our Group must address the fundraising issue and find ways of raising extra funds.

There were a few car boot sales by Graham Warnes and a bunny racing evening organised by Ted Hodges plus our annual November Fayre which raised $\pm 1,408$. Many thanks to all those that helped with this event including the Fayre committee of Gayna, Brenda and Fiona.

Also various donations came from Geoff Shore's clients and money raised by the section's Orlando brothers. Gayna Brice raised funds through Vinted and there were some small online donations. The Group also gets some income from the ASU Atlas who use our hall on a Thursday evening.

In 2023 our Group sadly had to wave goodbye to our minibus which had served the Group well for 13 years. It fell foul of the new ULEZ rules introduced by TfL in August of that year as it became non-compliant and would cost the Group $\pounds 12.50$ a day to use it.

The decision was taken to scrap the minibus and claim \pounds 7,000.00 in compensation from TfL. It was not as easy as it sounds and involved multiple attempts to get our application approved. As it was, after we had received the cheque TfL decided to raise the compensation by another \pounds 2,000.00. Such is life!

I have still to claim some gift aid from the forms from previous years but not many current forms are being signed and returned to the Group from parents. It is a golden opportunity to claim gift aid from the taxman which is free to do and costs our Group nothing too.

Due to the energy prices increasing for our all-electric hall, I decided to look for a better tariff. Octopus Energy was offering a better rate than our current supplier EDF although the choices were few and far between all suppliers. So I switched to Octopus in April 2023 for a one year contract.

Then a year later in April 2024 a new tariff was on offer from Octopus which no other supplier had and it was a tariff that had no standing charge, too good to be true I hear you say, so I had to phone the energy supplier to confirm it was right and indeed it was correct. It will certainly save our Group a bob or two over the 12 months.

We have all lived through a turbulent period in our lives with the cost of living crisis, increased energy costs, rising interest rates and the war in Ukraine all on the back of Covid. As a Scout Group we have weathered the storm well and are lucky to have the funds we have compared to the less fortunate Groups who have struggled.

There are grants that I claimed during Covid that still remain untouched and I am surprised I have not had to top up our current account when needed. But I now feel we may have peaked and our funds will slowly recede over the coming months. This has come at a time when some concerns about the state Sparks Hall's roof and the flooring have been highlighted. The hall is now over 30 years old and wear and tear is beginning to take its toll.

In the light of our lack of fundraising and reduced income it is inevitable and regrettable that the subs for our members will have to increase from September 2024. The last increase was over 10 years ago in April 2014 so we have absorbed rising prices and coped pretty well during that time. It is not an easy decision to take but needs must and we have to address any future projects with any extra revenue. It will not be cheap to replace our roof if the need arises and believe our reserves are not adequate to cover the cost.

Other costs that increase each year are our capitation, the insurance per member plus our hall and contents insurance. Council tax, water rates and energy costs all add to our expenditure including the Epsom and Ewell Scout shop which is always being used by our sections. Add on our equipment costs too including the climbing wall adjustments. It never ends.

Our committee seems to have been depleted recently but we seem to soldier on regardless not helped by the Scouting Organisation new set up which I believe does not help our cause. It seems determined to alienate the older long serving members. They have much experience dealing with Scouting issues. I will continue to do the role I have been entrusted with to the best of my capability but if I feel this so-called 'New Era' intimidates me and others for the way we have conducted our voluntary duties. I will not hesitate to walk away if the powers to be, in my opinion, undermine the true trusted method of Scouting. If it is not broken, why fix it.

So, many thanks to all the committee members over the past year and to those who have left the fold too. Martin as always, deserves to be commended for his stellar leadership as chairman. Also Gayna as secretary and GSL John for trying to steer the 1st Tolworth ship in the right direction. Also got to mention Lee and Ted for their valuable time helping out when needed.

Leaders and helpers need a big round of applause for all the hard work they do running the sections. We recently lost Luke and Marina as cub leaders so thank you both for your time. It was most appreciated.

Last but not least a big thank you to my wife Carol for many times she has to put up with the paperwork, receipts, the mutterings and me disappearing to clean at the hall for a while. Yes I do that too! Thank you dear for your patience. x

May the Powell be with you.

Terry Goodall Group Treasurer

THAMES Beaver Scout REPORT

So it's coming up to a year from when I agreed to start helping at Beavers as an assistant leader back in the summer term of last year! I can't believe how quickly that has come round, and it's about nine months since I took over as Beaver leader! We have squeezed in a lot! There have been many games played, different foods eaten, different countries learnt about, a visit from an MP, using our own facilities for bouldering and archery, and lots of badge work completed!!!

Our colony has also been growing steadily which will help to keep the whole group becoming an even stronger group! We have also just celebrated St George's Day and acknowledged all the achievements throughout the group, but a very well done to all the Beavers who attended the day and congratulations to those who gained awards! This term we will see how many badges will be earned and seeing those uniforms gain more badges to show off, so parents start practising your sewing skills, you could even start to teach your Beavers the art of badge sewing!!

Michelle Beaver Scout Leader Thames Beaver Scout Colony Boys and Girls age 5 ³/₄ - 8 Fridays 17.45 – 18.45

EVEREST Cub Scout REPORT

No report due to Leader Vacancy.

Everest Cub Scout Pack Boys and Girls age 8 – 10 ½ Wednesdays 18.30 – 20.00

SCOUT TROOP REPORT

This time last year, I told you that things almost felt "back to normal" after Covid Lockdown. I wish I could tell you now that we had moved on from that position, but I am not sure that I can truthfully say that. We still are suffering from the gap in skills and experiences of our young people. Our Scouts are still missing out now, not because we are unable to get together, or because of lack of opportunities or enthusiasm from my wonderful leadership team, but because of the financial situation. So many parents are having to limit the number of events they can afford their young people to join, because they, like all of us, are finding that money just doesn't stretch as far as it seemed to a few years ago.

But enough looking backwards, let us tell you of our successes during the past year.

We have six members who progressed to Atlas & other Explorer Units during the last year. It is such a benefit for them to be able to easily progress in their Scouting.

We knew that Troop numbers would drop when that group went but, probably because of frequent changes in leadership in the Cub Pack, we have not been able to hang on to all of the Cubs leaving Everest Pack. We have been lucky enough to have new members from outside the movement or from neighbouring groups but our Troop membership is currently around 25, instead of mid-30's. I am not unduly concerned. It is quite nice, from some points of view! We will bounce back, I am sure.

I am glad to say that we had 3 Chief Scout's Gold Awards completed this year.

Another cohort that have had to work harder to achieve this milestone, and many congratulations to them, and their parents, who have supported them. I added it up and we have had just over 60 Chief Scout's Golds since this badge system was started 20 years ago. Not a bad record!

We are providing a balanced programme on Friday evenings from Map-Reading to Patrol Challenges, lots of cooking, some First Aid, helping at Beaver and Cub Meetings, arts & crafts, I cannot name it all. We have had some problems doing the "outdoors" over last autumn & winter due to it raining whenever we tried to escape from Sparks Hall. You don't need a report on the weather except to hope that the summer is a little drier, if only to finish off some Outdoor Challenges.

We entered two teams for the County Cooking Competition in the autumn. The theme was "Good for the Planet", which was interpreted in many different ways! Our teams finished equal 8th and equal 20th. In my eyes, it is a success if a team achieves a 3 course meal in two hours in these competition conditions.

Well done to all who took part.

We entered one team for the County Night Exercise in March, based at Polyapes this time. Our team was led by one of our Assistant Patrol Leaders. They safely finished the whole route and did reasonably well on the challenges at each Checkpoint. We camped overnight after the Hike, instead of dragging parents out to collect them in the middle of the night. Unusual for us but necessary now we don't have the luxury of our own Minibus. Stuart and Alex ran a weekend camp last May, again at Polyapes, as a practice before being assessed for Nights Away Permits. We concentrated on Pioneering on this occasion and, under direction of Dave Bixby from Wimbledon & Wandle, built a substantial Rope Bridge using two A-frames. Hard work in the hot sunshine but fun and worth it. Thank you Dave.

Stuart & Alex also came with me to take two teams of Scouts to attend Strategy in June. This is a national event in Cirencester Park, with 300 - 400 Scouts & explorers attending, involving an all-day hike on Saturday, visiting a choice of 40 Checkpoints, with a competition to see which team can accrue the most points at the activities there. Lots of other things going on in the evenings and on Sunday morning from Disco to Talent shows, Arts & Crafts and sports competitions. A bit of a trek across the country in Friday evening rush hour, but a great experience.

We went to Huish Woods near Taunton in Somerset for Summer Camp, again taking our friends from 4th.Tolworth. We were also joined by several members of Atlas Explorers. We made sure that we took advantage of local opportunities including Caving at Cheddar Gorge, High Ropes in Taunton, Trampolining and a Mini Laser Quest at Flip Out, Swimming at the Leisure Pool in Brean as well as Climbing, Shooting & Tomahawks on site, and an abortive Hike. How did we pack so much into 8 days? Stuart & Millie drove the Minibuses. Julie & Chris drove a van one way each for all the kit. Thanks to all members of the team. It was a good week.

We have done an overnight Expedition in March, enabling Scouts from our Troop and from 4th.Tolworth, to gain Expedition Challenge or be gaining experience for next year. We seem to have gone to Polyapes on far more occasions than usual in the past 12 months, but on this occasion, one of our favourite campsites, at South Harting, was out of use, so we retreated nearer to home. A good weekend starting in Tolworth and finishing in Effingham. It was interesting that the map-reading that was so easy when you knew the roads around home, became less accurate in unknown territory!

I must say a big "Thank You" to my Leadership team. We all have other Scouting roles and challenges within Royal Kingston, GLSW and beyond. We are able to bring in ideas and experiences from outside and send some back in return. We don't all have to be there every week or every camp, so we mix and match with who is able to commit to different events. It is also good to share the load, and the fun, working particularly with Tia, Aidan & 4th Tolworth Troop, to support each other and all the young people in both Groups. Thank you all and long may it last.

Caroline Marsden Scout Leader, Scout Troop Boys and Girls age 10 ½ - 14 Fridays 19.30 – 21.30 Contact: Mrs Caroline Marsden – 07889 192 765 marsden697@btinternet.com

CIRCLE REPORT

At our March meeting we played the TV game "Family Fortunes" where 100 people were asked various questions. The required number of answers were between 3 and 6.

Examples were: Something people do on holiday (5) A word which is both a colour or a fruit (5) Something which has an isle down the middle (5) Signs you would see on an aeroplane (4) Something you would see at a football match (5)

Trying to look into people's brains wasn't easy! Our winners got half correct.

Our April meeting was Graham's Quiz. There were 5 papers consisting of Animals, Initials, Round Britain, Who Said? And Radio in the 50's and 60's.

Due to circumstances, only 4 members were present (one of which was me). The result was a win for our Chair, Margaret, with 92 points. 2nd was Pat Tomlinson 88 and Ken with 83.

It was agreed from the floor to have been a very good and enjoyable quiz.

Graham Warnes Circle Treasurer and Secretary

Fundraising

As you will have read from Martin and Terry's reports we have made the difficult decision to increase the subs for meetings. This is principle because we have been very lucky for a number of years to have had Graham Warnes (ably supported by his brother Ken and partner Margaret Warry) sorting donations, running Jumble sales and selling donated goods at many boot fairs. Now all three have retired from these activities our income is much reduced.

I would like to thank Graham for all he has done and continues to do for 1st Tolworth (St Matthew's) Scout Group.

Whilst our November Fayre raises a reasonable amount of money we really need other ideas of ways to fundraise and crucially **your help** to execute them. If you would like to help us raise some funds please do get in touch.

Gayna Brice Trustee Board Member 1sttolworthfundraising@gmail.com

UNIFORMS – HELPING WITH THE COST OF LIVING

We have in stock various items of uniform for Beavers, Cubs and Scouts. Please speak to your child's Leader as the stock is kept at Sparks Hall. Thank you.

We also accept donations of unwanted uniforms.

Brenda Pawley Group Trustee

POSTAGE STAMPS

The Charity Dog A.I.D. (Assistance in Disability) is collecting Great Britain and International stamps. They request that they are cut from envelopes, leaving about 1cm/1/4" of paper around each stamp. Thanks for doing this.

Please leave them in the box in the kitchen at Sparks Hall.

Margaret Warry Group President

1st TOLWORTH (ST MATTHEW'S) SCOUT GROUP

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF GROUP COUNCIL

To be held at Sparks Hall

Tuesday 4th June 2024 at 8.00 pm

AGENDA

- 1 Welcome by Chair
- 2 Apologies for absence
- 3 Group Constitution
- 4 Minutes of AGM held on 6th June 2023
- 5 Matters arising from Minutes
- 6 Group Lead Volunteer 1st Tolworth (St Matthews)
- 7 Approval of Annual Report
- 8 Approval of Accounts
- 9 Appoint a Chair of the Group Trustee Board
- 10 Appoint a Treasurer of the Group Trustee Board
- 11 Appoint a Secretary of the Group Trustee Board
- 12 Appoint other members of the Group Trustee Board
- 13 Appoint independent financial Examiner
- 14 Appointment Reappointment of Group President.
- 15 Appointment Reappointment of Group Vice President.
- 16 District Lead Volunteer Royal Kingston
- 17 The Group President.
- 18 Any other business.
- 19 Meeting Closure: Followed by Refreshments.