

Thorrington Scout Camp Trustee Board Minutes

Date: Thursday 31 October 2024

Venue: 30th Colchester Scout HQ, Rayner Road, Essex, CO2 9AA

Attendees: Bob Candler (BC), Ian Welch (IW), Hywel Edwards (HE), Steve Birkin (SB), Tammy Lorimer (TL), Chris Jay (CJ), Jack Dowrick (JD)

Apologies: Colin Batchelor (CB)

Introduction

CJ opened the meeting and explained that its purpose was to find a new way forward for Thorrington Scout Camp (TSC) following the implementation of the Transformation programme, with the aim of identifying how both the management and running of the campsite will be undertaken moving forward.

Currently, the running of TSC is fulfilled by the Thorrington Management Committee (TMC). The TMC is a sub-committee that meets monthly alongside dual district representation from Colchester Estuary (CEDS) and Colchester North (CNDS) to manage and run the campsite.

However, moving forward, in line with Transformation this can no longer be the process, and there is presently no scope for dual district Trustee Boards within the operating processes outlined by Transformation. TSC presently uses the CEDS charity number and as a result overall financial responsibility therefore lies within CEDS.

CJ also highlighted that the budget for the next financial year will soon need to be agreed and finalised and processes need to be determined of how this will be completed and approved.

1. Trustee Board

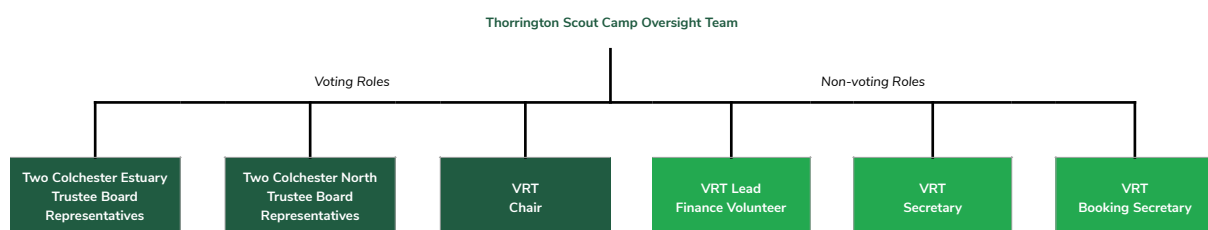
a. moving forward: It was noted that several varying avenues exist for TSC moving forward, such as establishing an independent charity number for TSC to operate under, which would require the establishment of a trustee board, or instead continue under the CEDS charity number, whilst operating under the oversight of both districts.

BC stated that he felt that the best path forward was to pursue an independent charity number for TSC to operate under, however, it was noted by other members present that it would need to be established who would act as a Trustee for TSC, as

well as the matter that TSC was gifted to Colchester Scouting and therefore it was split between the two Colchester districts for this reason, and if it was to pursue an independent charity number, steps would need to be taken to ensure that this would continue to be the case in perpetuity for future generations should any unforeseen circumstances arise and compromise the future of TSC and therefore give both CEDS and CNDS first refusal if this occurred, ensuring its continuation, additionally it was also noted that all buildings at TSC are currently in ownership of the districts and this would need them to be signed over to TSC to pursue an independent charity number.

Following discussions it was decided that, currently, the best path forward would be to establish a Thorrington Scout Camp Oversight Team (TSCOT) that was responsible for the oversight and financial management of TSC, and a Volunteer Running Team (VRT) that would be responsible for the day-to-day operations and would report to the TSCOT. Additionally, it was also decided that the financial management of TSC be undertaken via OSM Accountancy Tools, JD has advised that this will require the creation of an OSM Section for Thorrington as this is not available via the OSM Venue Booking System that TSC also utilises to manage bookings.

It was agreed that the TSCOT would be formed of both voting and non-voting positions; the voting positions would be held by representatives of CEDS and CNDS as well as the VRT Chair who is to be co-elected by both CEDS and CNDS Trustee Boards, and the Chair would be required to be non-biased and reflect the majority opinion of the VRT. The non-voting positions would be held by the VRT lead finance volunteer, VRT secretary and VRT booking secretary; however these non-voting roles would not always require regular attendance and would only need to attend the meetings where matters relevant to their role are discussed.



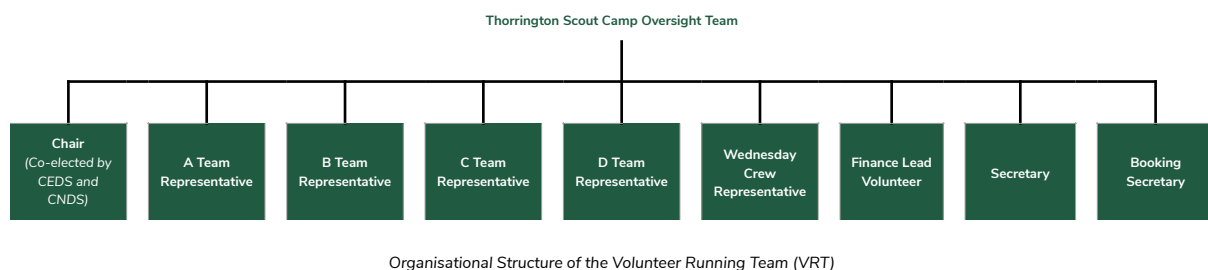
Organisational Structure of the Thorrington Scout Camp Oversight Team (TSCOT)

2. Volunteer Running Team

a. operations: It was agreed that the VRT would be responsible for the day-to-day running of the campsite and would set task allocation within the Warden Teams in terms of campsite works to be undertaken, as well as identifying new tasks/works to

be completed, and additionally would escalate any matters that cannot be resolved to TSCOT and generate reports for TSCOT meetings that outline works/concerns to be reviewed.

It was noted that the VRT would largely mimic the existing composition of the previous TMC, and would consist of a Chair that is co-elected by CEDS and CNDS, as well as a representative from each Warden Team (A, B, C and D Teams as well as Wednesday Crew), as well as a lead finance volunteer, secretary and bookings secretary. IW advised that to avoid a single point of failure roles should be fulfilled by teams rather than specific individuals.



b. autonomy: CJ asked how the establishment of a TSCOT would affect the autonomy of a VRT, however, it was noted by others that the autonomy of the VRT would continue, as the budgets/oversight would be set by TSCOT and the VRT would operate within this remit.

BC felt that it was important that the VRT looks far enough ahead to anticipate any issues rather than be reactionary, and felt it was important that they should engage in fundraising to anticipate funds for such issues, but noted that major infrastructure works or investment would require sign-off from the TSCOT.

CJ raised that he felt at present the level of work being undertaken by sole individuals was unsustainable, and that previously the establishment of a paid warden at TSC was investigated and wished this to be revisited by the TSCOT but did note issues however with establishing this without TSC holding it's own charity number as this would presently require CEDS Trustee Board to sign-off on the proposal.

3. Thorrington Scout Camp Operating Procedures

a. structure: It was outlined that the TSCOT will be responsible for the oversight of TSC regarding financial and management matters, and will meet quarterly with meetings to be held in January, March, July and November of each year, with the first meeting to be held on the 27th January 2025 at the 34th Colchester Scout Group HQ; TL has agreed to book the hall for this date.

The VRT will be responsible for the day-to-day running of the campsite, and will implement job planning, task setting, build budget proposals and will also manage issues as they arise and escalate any items to the TSCOT as required. It was agreed that the VRT would continue to meet monthly; however, it is to be investigated as to whether the meeting be held in more favourable locations and on a different day to assist with attendance, additionally, if a warden team representative is unable to attend, then a delegate is requested to be sent in their absence to allow continued planning.

b. terms of reference: HE proposed that the TSCOT set terms of reference for the VRT which outlined the limits of their autonomy so that situations of ambiguity can be avoided, and ensure that items are not escalated to the TSCOT unnecessarily and therefore do not hinder the day-to-day running of TSC. Additionally, it was agreed that equal weighting should be given to the VRT in terms of their majority opinion on decisions due to their historic experience of running TSC.

4. Finances

a. financial operations: It was agreed that financial oversight would fall under the remit of TSCOT, as due to the use of the CEDS charity number, it means that ultimately financial matters lie with the CEDS Trustee Board, but the day-to-day finances of TSC would be completed by the VRT as TL would fulfil book-keeping duties, and process payments. HE noted that the way CEDS and CNDS operate their financial policies would naturally differ but it was felt that this would be able to be mitigated with regards to application for TSC.

b. dual signatories: HE advised that dual signatories would be needed with regards to major spending/expenditure and that where possible this should take the form of one representative from either district doing so, however, IW and HE agreed that it was important CEDS and CNDS worked collaboratively in the sense that if an individual was unavailable then two signatories from the same district can sign-off requests as to not cause undue delay to TSC.

c. financial data and finance team: IW and HE noted that to accurately set budgets, it was important that previous financial data was utilised, TL advised those present that she had received this historical data from Lorraine Francis to facilitate this. HE noted that the finances should be undertaken as a team with the financial teams from both CEDS and CNDS assisting TL.

5. Budgets

a. budget setting: As previously agreed in the meeting, TSCOT is to be responsible for setting and approving budgets for the VRT. CJ asked what would occur should additional funds be required for budgets, or if higher-than-expected expenditure occurred as this can typically happen when unforeseen issues arise towards the end of the financial year, however, following further discussion it was agreed that the VRT would have the autonomy to reallocate budgetary funds if required, as long as this did not compromise other operational aspects of the campsite, e.g. an unspent budget being reallocated to a budget that has elevated costs. It was noted that whilst TSCOT do not need to approve this, they should be notified if it occurs.

HE also advised that CEDS have a policy that if additional expenditure is required that is below a certain limit, then this can be signed off by a singular trustee so that it does not have to be delayed until the next TSCOT committee meeting, however, any spending above the set limit would require escalation to TSCOT.

b. budget approval for 2025/26 financial year: It was agreed that the budget for the 2025/26 financial year should be finalised by January and that a “soft” budget be submitted prior to Christmas so that CNDS are able to approve a “soft” version at their next Trustee Board meeting, with CEDS Trustee Board meeting in January.

It was also noted that Warden Teams would be responsible for exercising budget control when undertaking site works, and that any project spending would be in accordance with this.

6. Day-to-Day Finances

a. structure: TL is responsible for the day-to-day finance management at TSC, and receive assistance from the CEDS and CNDS treasurer teams.

b. accountancy tools: OSM accountancy tools to be utilised, JD and TL to liaise and complete adoption of new software.

7. Future Planning

a. future planning: It was agreed that the VRT are to identify and report matters regarding future planning in relation to large projects/infrastructure works to the TSCOT at their quarterly meetings so that budgets are able to be reviewed and approved for such matters.

8. Training and Development

a. training responsibilities: CJ advised that following the alterations to the organisational structure of TSC, training responsibilities would now fall under the remit of the two districts, as they are now responsible for the oversight of TSC, and therefore they will need to identify a training compliance officer to be allocated as a point of contact.

b. line managers: Duty Wardens will be the line managers for their respective warden teams, and training notices and compliance issues are to be sent to the respective Duty Warden via their TSC email address to ensure compliance with Scouting PoR, as outlined in Transformation. Additionally, the Duty Wardens will need to liaise with the Volunteering Development Team (VDT) to ascertain whether they need to undertake any additional training.

9. Risk Management

a. responsibilities: It was agreed that responsibilities for risk management and the safe running of TSC lie with TSCOT.

10. Any Other Business

a. booking acceptance: CJ advised that there was no formal policy for the acceptance of bookings, there is however a longstanding understanding that when TSC was gifted to Colchester Scouting, it was to be “for the benefit of the children”. IW advised that if any provisional bookings needed clarification and/or review then this should be sent out via the TSCOT Whatsapp Group for approval.

b. first steps: The initial steps for the TSCOT and VRT were agreed as follows

TSCOT:

- provide assistance with the financial management of TSC.
- outline and approve the budget for the 2025/26 financial year.
- provide oversight for TSC to ensure continued safe operation.

VRT:

- allocate tasks/site works to be undertaken by the Warden Teams.
- to create and submit a budget proposal to the TSCOT for approval.