



South London Scout Centre
The Fort



Where it all happens!

Creating a modern centre for the next 50 years

What is scouting...

...the world's largest youth movement

Scouting is a worldwide movement with over 50 million members across the globe, spread across 216 countries and territories.

...with 500,000 members in the UK

This includes around 100,000 adults who have taken up appointments as volunteer leaders, helpers, administrators and supporters. Scouting across the UK is operated locally in 10,000 scout groups and 2000 explorer scout units.

...everyone from all faiths & backgrounds

The Scout Association in the UK accepts members of all faiths and offers equal opportunities are offered to everyone no matter what their background may be.

...learning by doing from 4 to 25 years

Scouting works well when young people enjoy 'learning by doing' working in partnership with adults - taking part in activities and new experiences, exploring the outdoors, participating in teams and taking responsibility.

...following the scout promise

Scouting has a simple and positive promise that all members are required to make. The promise, together with the scout law, gives a distinctive ethos to the practices of the movement and acts as a bond with scouts in other countries.



A Scout leader wearing a red jacket with the Scout logo and a black beanie is talking to a group of children in a forest. The background is filled with bare tree branches and green foliage.

About us

South London Scouts is responsible for supporting scouting across the London Borough's of Wandsworth, Lambeth, Southwark, Lewisham and Royal Greenwich. We have 92 Scout Groups and 27 Explorer Scout Units spread across our five Scout Districts which mirror the London Borough boundaries.

Every week over 1,500 adults give some of their free time to help provide exciting programmes to over 4000 young people aged between 4 and 25 years. They carry out a variety of roles to help manage, support, govern and administer local scouting and run activities for Squirrels (4 to 6 year olds), Beavers (6 to 8 year olds), Cubs (8 to 10½), Scouts (10½ to 14 year olds), Explorers (14 to 18 year olds) and Scout Network (18 to 25 year olds).

Our charity

Greater London South County Scout Council (known as South London Scouts), is an unincorporated association constituted in accordance with the rules of The Scout Association (The Scout Association registration number 00139, and a registered charity in the UK, number 303883).

The Scout Association (registered charity number 306101), is incorporated by Royal Charter to promote the development of young people in achieving their full physical, emotional, intellectual, social and spiritual potentials as individuals, as responsible citizens and as members of their local, national and international communities.

Life is an adventure...

As scouts, we believe in preparing young people with skills for life. We encourage our young people to do more, learn more and be more.

Each week, we give young people the opportunity to enjoy fun and adventure while developing the skills they need to succeed, now and in the future. We're talking about teamwork, leadership and resilience – skills that have helped scouts become social workers, teachers, doctors, engineers, fire fighters, bus drivers, nurses, foster parents and olympians (to name but a few): In short they are the people who make our society work. Scouts are all around you. You will know them by their values: cooperation, respect and integrity that they learnt when they were young.

When our members memorised their scout promise on a cold weekday night, they were not just joining a youth club, they were choosing a code which many would follow throughout their lives. They were making a choice to live a meaningful life, full of fun, adventure and friendship and to put others before themselves.



The Fort - South London Scout Centre

The South London Scout Centre – known by most as The Fort, is our county centre and campsite. It is loved and used by members of our groups and units across South London, by scouts, guides and other youth organisations across the country and the world, and by members of other organisations, families, and friends in our local community and far and wide. Our centre, known as The Fort, has wonderful facilities and easy access to local transport connections, which makes it such an easy place to experience.

The centre is a 15 minute train journey from central London and is within easy walking distance of Dulwich Picture Gallery, Horniman Museum, and Crystal Palace National Sports Centre.

What's on offer:

- amazing camping facilities
- great access to London and its attractions
- high standard of indoor accommodation
- excellent for patrol camping



Centre location

Located at the top of Grange Lane, in Dulwich, The Fort is a short walk from Sydenham Hill train station.

The centre's address is The South London Scout Centre, Grange Lane, Dulwich, London SE21 7LH.



Our objectives

Scouting across South London Scout County is strong and growing and needs a modern, flagship facility that meets the needs of modern-day scouting at all levels.

We need to provide better facilities for our volunteers to enhance their capacity to bring new ideas and events for our members in a warm, safe atmosphere during inclement weather, dark winter nights, and long summer evenings.

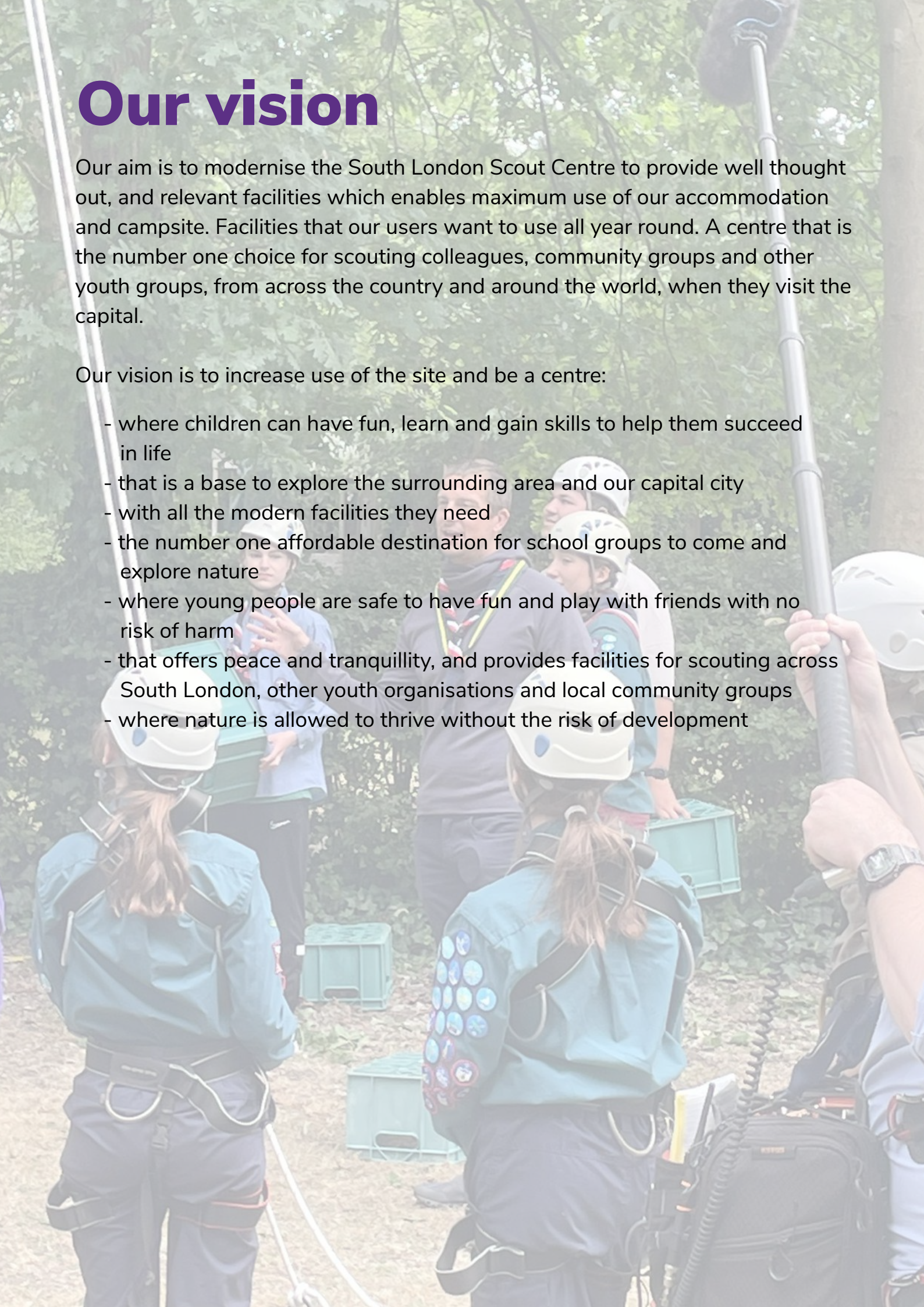
We need to develop our centre as a prime location for an overnight venue (because of the fantastic proximity to local woodland and the centre of London), with amazing indoor facilities including: modern adaptable bedrooms, a large hall, catering kitchen, and modern toilets and wash rooms.

Our vision

Our aim is to modernise the South London Scout Centre to provide well thought out, and relevant facilities which enables maximum use of our accommodation and campsite. Facilities that our users want to use all year round. A centre that is the number one choice for scouting colleagues, community groups and other youth groups, from across the country and around the world, when they visit the capital.

Our vision is to increase use of the site and be a centre:

- where children can have fun, learn and gain skills to help them succeed in life
- that is a base to explore the surrounding area and our capital city
- with all the modern facilities they need
- the number one affordable destination for school groups to come and explore nature
- where young people are safe to have fun and play with friends with no risk of harm
- that offers peace and tranquillity, and provides facilities for scouting across South London, other youth organisations and local community groups
- where nature is allowed to thrive without the risk of development





Modern facilities

We have recently renewed our lease with Dulwich Estates and over the coming years we will be undertaking an exciting project of major development of the centre, including, new facilities with areas and services just for our use, and areas for public hire.

Our location in Dulwich provides an excellent environment for young people and adults to thrive, learn, share and belong. Our open spaces suits many of our scouting activities but at present some of our building facilities are not adequate. With development of modern office and team facilities and a new accommodation building, bigger and better events for all our members can be achieved.

Our long term aims

Our long-term aim is to develop the centre from the existing facilities, which has some worn and outdated, but very well kept, accommodation and facilities to a centre providing a high-quality facility.



Phased development



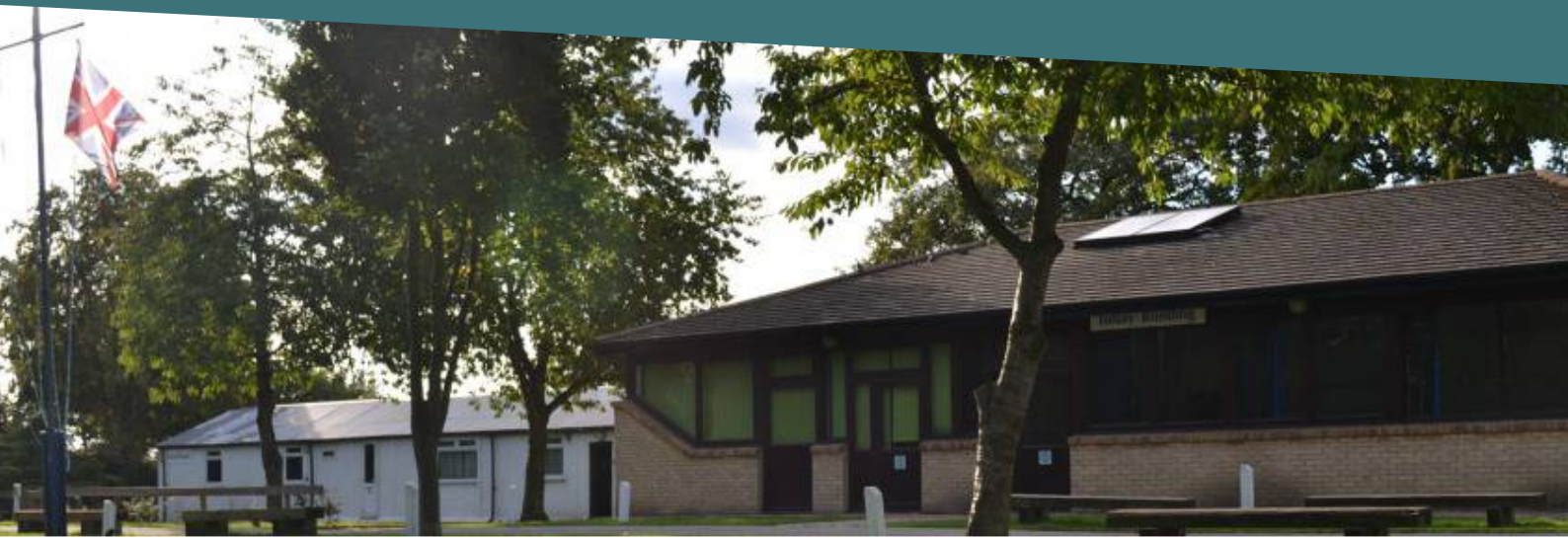
PHASE ONE

Preparing for the future - starting early 2024

- Repurpose our current office space to provide additional accommodation for hire
- Repurpose the current scout centre office to provide volunteer accommodation
- Refurbish additional accommodation space to provide additional accommodation in our Troop Room facilities

and...

- Replace the roof on the Ismay Building - pictured below
- Convert our existing boardroom (the room with the green blinds) and stores into a centralised scout centre and county services hub, which includes a reception, centralised administration and scout centre office space, and a 'back office' and meeting room



Phase Two

1. install a number of onsite activities for users to book whilst staying at the centre
2. replace the existing camping cooking shelters around the centre
3. carry out any appropriate, limited, improvements to site security

Phase Three

1. demolish the existing Sunley building and construct the accommodation building

Phase Four

1. lay new roadways around the site
2. resurface the outside and onsite car park areas which will then have multi use as either parking or hard surface activity areas
2. install new external gates and fencing
3. install traffic management system

Phase five

1. upgrade the WCs and washroom facilities in the Ismay building to bring them up to a higher standard and to include more facilities with adapted and gender-neutral needs

Why we need a new accommodation building

The Sunley building was built in 1939, and has over time been extended and refurbished to become an indoor accommodation block for 50 people.

Although extended and maintained as well as can be expected within its spatial and budgetary constraints, the building is no longer fit for purpose. It sits squarely in the category of “tear it down and start over again”. Its size and facilities are inadequate for current uses and struggles to meet health and safety and access requirements.

It is apparent that the facilities in the Sunley building are aged and 'old fashioned'. Simply put they are not adequate for scouting today and what we need to use it for.

We need better toilets, washing and kitchen facilities. We also need smaller, adaptable bedroom accommodation to fit with the mixed structure of scouting. Dependant on funds we would like to go from a single-story structure to a two story (and therefore two user), building, to add to facilities we can offer. As part of the new building we want to add extra washroom facilities for outside campers to use.



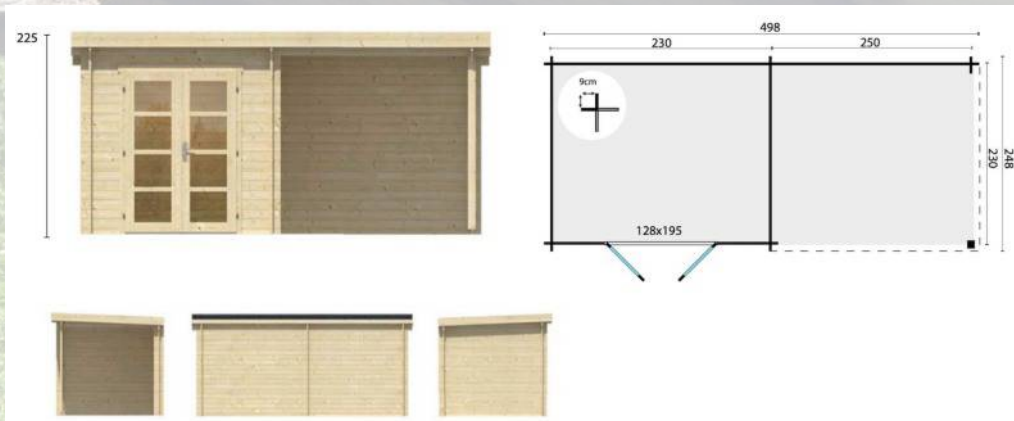
Site shelters

We currently have five wooden shelters around the camping area that are used by campers for storing food and cooking as required.

Built over 40 years ago, these basic, old and weathered structures are now beyond repair and need replacing.

We are planning to replace each one of these shelters with a mixture of modern cabins and shelters.

Type 1



Type 2



Type 3



Closing thoughts...

The South London Scout Centre continues to attract widespread use which goes far beyond our membership, sharing the values and successes of our Movement and providing a window into our scouting world.

Research has shown the long-term impact scouting can have on the wellbeing of our members. Recent years have been challenging, and our centre continues to act as a centre point for scouting across South London and for local community groups in our surrounding area. Allowing them to connect with our scouting' values and explore nature, boosting their wellbeing and building their life, citizenship and leadership skills.

The Fort is one of Dulwich's hidden treasures. We want to share our centre with the local community, particularly concentrating on reaching young people from minority and disadvantaged backgrounds, creating a modern, fun and safe venue for a high-quality experience. Working with schools and local communities we plan to reach young people who are not currently scouts so that they can benefit from our skills for life mission.

As a volunteer-led movement, we recognise the value of our supporters' expertise, time and enthusiasm. A range of new volunteering opportunities will be created through the project. These will support members to learn new skills, develop their knowledge and confidence, and take new pathways to employment and improved wellbeing.

We invite you to join us and continue our legacy for The Fort. With your generous support, and by embracing our purpose to actively engage and support young people in their personal development, empowering them to make a positive contribution to society, we will be able to reach more young people than ever before. Inspiring them to shape their own futures and contribute to their communities which will encourage a new generation of scouts and volunteers to develop scouting's signature traits of initiative, goodwill, teamwork and social belonging.



Our projected project costs

Below are some of our forecast costs that we need to fundraise to help us release our vision:

Phase one

The Fort and County services centre and additional accommodation:

£130,000

Renew existing roof on the Ismay Building:

£ 50,000

Phase two

New site shelters

Type 1: 1 x log shelter - £7.500 each

Type 2: 3 x enclosed log shelter - £7,550 each

Type 3: 2 x log gazebo - £7.600 each

Phase three

Construction of a new accommodation building:

£750,000+

Furnishing of the new accommodation building:

£300.000

Longer-term

Phase four & Five

£TBA



Our history

In 1939 the Army had requisitioned the farm at the top of Grange Lane which then occupied the land between the Golf Course and Cox's Walk, in order to establish a Gun and Searchlight Battery to protect London during the Blitz.

In 1960 the land was returned to the Dulwich Estate with the gun emplacements still to clear and a host of temporary buildings in various states of dilapidation. In 1961, Bill Hall, the then scout master of the 48th Camberwell (3rd Dulwich College Scout Group), was offered use of the de-requisitioned gun-site as a group headquarters. The estates manager showed the leaders around the site and asked what they wanted. They tried to restrain their ambitions as surely the mess building was more than they could hope to use or maintain? But they chose a range of three buildings which had included the officers' mess and the WRAC building which appeared to be in relatively sound condition, and then said yes also to the lorry garage which would accommodate the group stores, and marked off an area of land in front of them. The rest of the site would be cleared and laid out as allotments (which are still in very active use today).

Bill Hall, with a stroke of imaginative romanticism, named the site "The Fort" to commemorate its war-time use. The scouts' enthusiasm was caught. They marked out their boundaries with massive posts "cannibalised" from the gun-site, and set to work painting and refurbishing the buildings. Boys stayed in the buildings or camped for weekends, but some work had to be done professionally. The increased size of the group brought in new parents who gave their support both financial and physical. They even got a subscription from P. G. Wodehouse.

In 1962 The Fort was officially opened by Sir Charles McLean, the then Chief Scout of United Kingdom, as the Old Alleynian group's headquarters.

Although the buildings were fit for use to provide separate club-rooms for each of the four units of the group, major reconstruction of the mess was financed by a grant from the charitable trust of Tom Ismay, whose father had been the chairman of the White Star who escaped when their flagship, the Titanic, sank on its maiden voyage. In 1988 the original Ismay room was demolished and the Ismay building was built, again finance by a generous donation from the Ismay trust and this building is still very well used today. At this time improvements were also made to continue the life of the other original "temporary" buildings.

At that time there were 95,000 scouts in the scout county of Greater London. To help with the support and administration, Greater London was divided into five scout counties, and Bill Hall became county commissioner of Greater London South, with 16,000 members. He appointed Gordon Carr as the centre warden, first of the South London Training Ground and then of the South London Scout Centre, and Gordon continues as the full-time voluntary warden to this day.

In 1967 Dulwich College abolished Saturday school, and it was no longer practical to have scout meetings on that day. The 48th Camberwell Scout Group was closed and the Greater London South Scout County took over the Fort as the county headquarters.

Today, The Fort continues as the county headquarters and is well used, not only by scouts, but also by other organisations and the wider community. There is currently accommodation for 100 in three separate buildings, each with its own kitchen and washing facilities, to say nothing of the ample camping space.

Do you know...

- Scouting is a charity. All our adults are volunteers and the majority have a full time job and family
- About half our volunteers are female
- Not all adults in scouting wear uniform or work directly with young people
- All our volunteers are covered by a comprehensive insurance while taking part in scouting activities
- There are over 30,000 young people waiting to join scouting. The main reason for this large waiting list is that we need more adults to help us meet the demand for scouting across the UK.

How we operate...

All our adults operate within the key polies of the association:

- Anti bullying - bullying of any type is unacceptable
- Spiritual - understand and observe the scout promise
- Equal opportunities - no young person or adult should experience discrimination
- Safety - provide scouting in a safe manner
- Development - make scouting available to all communities
- Safeguarding - safeguard the welfare of all members



Scouts
South London



southlondonscouts.org.uk



contact.us@southlondonscouts.org.uk



#SouthLondonScouts