



Branching Out: Welcome to the Forest of Dean District



An essential field guide for
new adult volunteers.

Welcome to one of the most distinctive corners of the UK. We cover a vast rural area of forest, hills, and rivers, supporting over 800 young people from villages and small towns. You are now part of a team that helps young people gain skills for life.

This guide complements your national learning, focusing strictly on the local people, places, and processes you need to know right now.





The Landscape: How Scouting Feels Here



Rural Reality.

We lean into our surroundings. Woods, hills, rivers, and historic sites shape our programme. Camps, wide games, fires, and night skies are everyday life here.



The Logistics.

We are a rural area. Travel takes time, lifts matter, and we are thoughtful about where we meet.



The Network.

You are never on your own. You are part of a network of Groups and Units that share equipment, experience, and ideas.

Scenario Spotlight

Scenario: Is Forest of Dean Scouts just one group?

Answer: No, we are a District of multiple Scout Groups, Explorer Units, and a Young Leaders Unit working together.

Aylburton & Lydney

Cinderford

Clearwell & Sling

Mayhill & Huntley

Mitcheldean

Newent

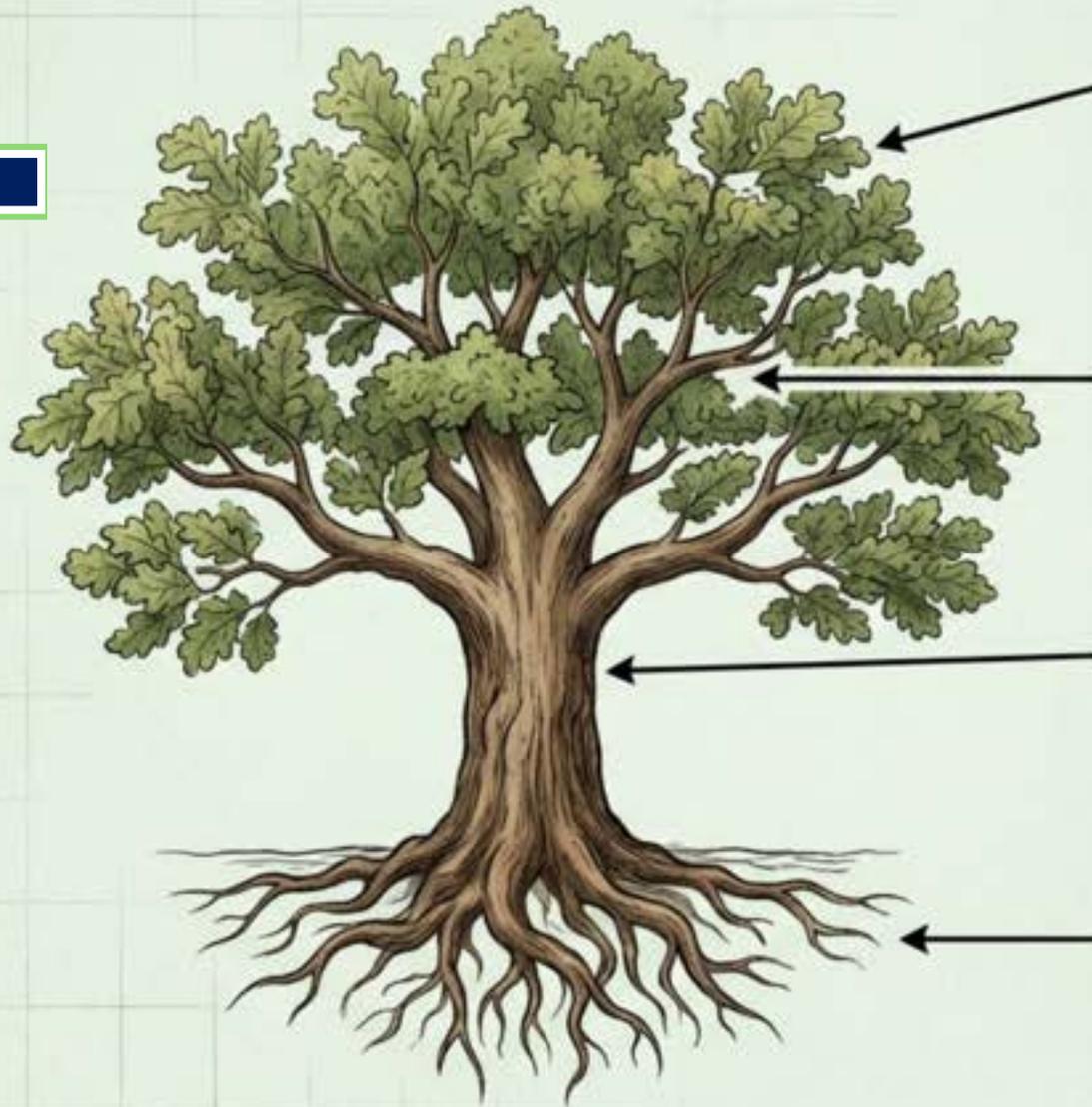
Royal Forest

Ruardean

St Briavels

Staunton & Corse

The Big Picture: How We Fit Together



Groups & Units

Your Group
Weekly delivery, where you are now.

District Level

Forest of Dean
Local support, network, District campsites.

County Level

Gloucestershire Scouts
Big events like 'Strategy' & 'Evolution', specialist training.

National Level

The Scout Association
Policy, Insurance, Programme.

Gloucestershire Scouts:

We are one of several Districts in the County. They support us with major events and specialist advice.

Forest of Dean District:

We handle local delivery. If you need help, the District team is your first port of call outside your Group.

Who's Who: Navigation & Support



District Lead Volunteer (DLV)

Leads the District, ensures safety and culture. The 'Captain' of the ship.



Group Lead Volunteers (GLVs)

Your likely line manager. They look after the Group's sections and leadership teams.



14-24 Team

Oversees Explorer Units and Young Leaders, connecting older youth to awards and adult roles.



Support Teams

Volunteers for Programme (events/camps), Development (training/welcome), and Support (venues/media).

Scenario Spotlight →

- **Scenario:** You want to run a camp next term? Ask your Group Lead Volunteer (GLV).
- **Scenario:** Serious safeguarding concern? Follow procedures immediately, then inform GLV or DLV.

Our Groups & Locations

Mapping the Forest of Dean Scout District



Aylburton & Lydney

Cinderford

Clearwell & Sling

Mayhill & Huntley

Mitcheldean

Newent

Royal Forest

Ruardean

St Briavels

Staunton & Corse

The Essentials: District & Local Sites



Deer Park (Lydney)

Our District campsite. 'Really greenfield.' Limited facilities, huge opportunities for back-to-basics camping.



Beaver Lodge (Parkend)

A hall in the heart of the Forest. Includes kitchen, toilets, stream, and campfire circle. Limited cell network.



May Hill Scout Camp

Traditional group-run site with a hut. Offers views as far as the Brecon Beacons.



Kensley Shed (Nr Worgreens Lake)

Basic wooden building surrounded by forest. Ideal for patrol camps.

Wider Adventures: Nearby & Partner Sites



YHA St Briavels

Sleep in a real castle.
YHA-led activities
available.



Biblins (Symonds Yat)

Riverside site with a
suspended rope bridge.
Perfect base for canoeing
and walking.



Polish House (St Briavels)

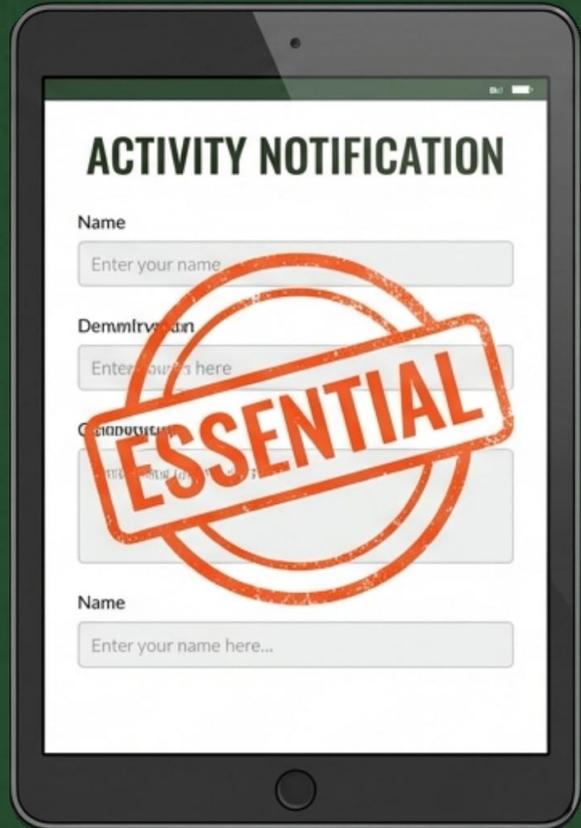
Modern accommodation
in ancient woodland



Botany Bay (Tintern)

Run by Gwent Scouts in the
Wye Valley. Indoor/outdoor
accommodation. Great for
cross-border adventures.

Also: Apple Orchard (Westbury-on-Severn) - Huge space for large events.



The Logistics of Adventure

The Golden Rule

Any time you meet away from your usual meeting place, you **must complete an Activity away from HQ Notification Form**

- **Where to find it:** Available on the District website (fodscouts.org.uk).
- **Nights Away:** Requires a separate Notification form via the 'My Membership' area on scouts.org.uk.

Scenario Spotlight

Scenario: I'm just going for a hike, do I need a form?

Answer: Yes. If it's away from the normal venue, fill in the form and do a Risk Assessment.



Frequencies: How We Talk



1
Email
Official channel for
District updates.



2
OAKLEAF
Monthly District newsletter.
The must-read digest.



3
Website
(fodscouts.org.uk)
The reference library.
Contacts & forms.



4
**District Leaders
Facebook**
Community chatter
& quick updates.



5
Volunteer Drop-in
Coleford Council Offices,
4th Weds/month (7-9pm).



6
WhatsApp
Rapid broadcast



Safety in the Forest



Context: We work in woods, hills, and rivers. Phone signals are often poor.



Know your role: Don't work beyond your training (e.g., archery/climbing requires permits).



Plan & Assess: Risk assessments are mandatory, not optional.



Speak Up: If you are exhausted or see something unsafe, say so.



The Trailhead: Getting Stuck In

You don't need to be Bear Grylls. Just show up and get stuck in.



ACTION PLAN

- Attend a full meeting: Watch how arrivals and departures are handled.*
- The Three Conversations: Chat with your Line Manager, your Team, and one person outside your Group.*
- Get Connected: Bookmark the District website and set up your OSM (Online Scout Manager) access.*

Growing Into Your Role



Week 1-4

Build relationships.
Help run *one* small part of an evening.



Term 1

Agree what 'success' looks like with your manager.



Ongoing

Link your 'Growing Roots' learning to real activities.



Opportunity:

Keep an eye on **OAKLEAF** for District events—low-risk ways to try new things with backup.

Quick Knowledge Check

Where is the District greenfield campsite?



Deer Park

Form needed for hikes away from the hall?



Activity Notification Form

First point of contact for support?



Group Lead Volunteer

Face-to-face meet up?



Volunteer Drop-in
(Coleford, 4th Weds)



The Adventure Begins

"Scouts was the first step on a journey that led to me becoming an astronaut. With the right skills, anything is possible." — Tim Peake.



You are joining a movement of over 800 people in the Forest of Dean. Thank you for packing your bag and joining the expedition.

 **Email:** info@forestofdeanscouts.org

 **Next Step:** Speak to your Group Lead
Volunteer to agree on your first 'Three Chats.'



Forest of Dean District Leaders
Group

WhatsApp group

