South West Cheshire

User Guide

'Away from HQ' Activity Approval Process

CONTENTS

PURPOSE

This document sets out the process for approving activities in South West Cheshire and outlines local approval responsibilities for different types of activity. The user instructions for completion of the activity approval form and for approving/rejecting activities are also appended.

APPROVAL RESPONSIBILITIES

Scouts POR (rule 9.1) states that "the District Lead Volunteer is responsible for approving all activities for Squirrel Scouts, Beaver Scouts, Cub Scouts, Scouts and Explorer Scouts. This will usually be by means of an informal system agreed between the District Lead Volunteer and each Group Lead Volunteer or District 14-24 Team Leader".

This document sets out the delegated responsibilities for authorising activities under POR Rule 9.1 in South West Cheshire.

1. All activities taking place away from a Group or Section's usual meeting place should be notified using the District's activity approval form, and should only be allowed to run if approval is received in advance of the activity date.

2. There are different activity approval requirements for different categories of activity. The following table sets out who is responsible for authorising activities in each category for members of each Section:

Section	Activity Categories		
	Scout-led activity run outside of the Adventurous Activity Permit Scheme	Scout-led activity run under the Adventurous Activity Permit Scheme	Externally-led activity
Squirrel, Beaver, Cub and Scout Sections	GLV	DLV or Programme Team Leader	DLV or Programme Team Leader
Explorer Sections & Scout Network	14-24 Team Leader	DLV or Programme Team Leader	DLV or Programme Team Leader

3. For all activities being run under the Scouts Adventurous Activity Permit Scheme or those booked with an External supplier (e.g. a commercially run climbing wall), suitable Risk Assessments must be provided for review as part of the approval process. Where a permit holder is providing an activity, their details must also be provided. However, these requirements are waived for certain pre-approved activities including those booked at Milldale via the Campsite Team, and those being organised and run by the District's Programme Team or Activities Sub-Teams. This logic is built into the approval form to ensure clarity.

4. Where the Group Lead Volunteer or 14-24 Team Leader is taking on the role of Leader in Charge for an activity they would usually approve, approval will be automatically redirected to the District Lead Volunteer.

5. If, in any instance, a Group Lead Volunteer or the 14-24 Team Leader is unsure whether to authorise a particular activity, they should discuss this with the District Lead Volunteer.

6. All Nights Away Notifications must be submitted via the digital tool at Scouts.org.uk. These will be reviewed and approved by either the District Lead Volunteer or the District Nights Away Team Leader who share the responsibility for checking that the information provided on the form complies with the requirements for Nights Away.

This activity approval process and any matters or issues arising will be discussed at each District Leadership Team meeting, to ensure that everyone is comfortable with the process outlined above and applying consistency, also providing an opportunity for the system to be reviewed and amended as appropriate.

THE ACTIVITY APPROVAL FORM

The District has developed an approval form for activities being run away from the Group's usual meeting place, or under the Scouts Adventurous Activity Permit Scheme. The form collects the information needed for each activity. It uses conditional questions so volunteers only see what's relevant.

The purpose of the form is to:

1. Improve data capture to ensure that the relevant information is collected and stored appropriately

2. Facilitate a robust approval process for activities, ensuring they can be approved at the relevant level and in a timely manner

3. Maintain a central record of all activities being run in the District

4. Enable periodic audit of activity notifications and the adequacy/quality of risk assessments to drive continuous improvement

The form and any automation flows running from it will be securely hosted in the District's Microsoft 365 Tenant, along with all data captured during the approval process.

A link to the form will be made available on the District website so that anyone wishing to submit an activity for approval can easily find it at any time.

The form can be found here: [South West Cheshire Activity Approval Form – Fill in form](#)

User instructions for completing and submitting the form and receiving a response can be found in [Appendix One](#).

THE APPROVAL PROCESS

Volunteers working with Groups and Sections around South West Cheshire should complete the activity approval form in respect of any activity being planned outside the boundary of their usual meeting place. The approval process works as follows:

1. Submitter completes approval form (at least 7 days before activity date)

2. System saves form and supporting risk assessments to SWC Sharepoint site

3. Submitter receives confirmation email, with copy of form data attached

4. Request is automatically routed to the relevant approver

5. Approver reviews and requests further information if needed

6. Approver chooses to either approve or reject the request.

7. Automated email notifications confirm the approval or rejection

APPROVING ACTIVITIES

When receiving details of an activity assigned to them for approval, approvers will be able to review the information from the form submission and any submitted risk assessment(s). They then have the following options:

Approve – if happy with the proposed arrangements, they may approve the activity.

Reassign – if there is a reason they shouldn't approve this activity (for example the GLV is also the leader in charge of the activity) they can decide to reassign it to another approver.

Reject – if it's necessary to reject the activity, they may do so.

Approvers may choose to request a risk assessment even if it was not mandatory for the submitter to include this with the activity notification.

It's OK to stop an activity. Approvers should withhold approval for any activity if they have safety concerns which are unresolved. This is part of our collective work to create a culture where Safety is a high priority.

Don't backdate approvals. If someone has submitted an activity notification which you are reviewing retrospectively (after the date of the activity has passed) please clarify with the submitter that the date shown is correct. Any request to retrospectively approve an activity for a date in the past will automatically be escalated to Dan Baldwin, District Lead Volunteer.

IF YOU NEED SUPPORT

Here's a quick reference guide to where you can find support with elements of this process:

Support need	Who to contact	Contact details
Problem with the approval form or automations not working	Dan Baldwin DLV	DLV@swcscouts.org.uk
Questions about the approval process	Dan Baldwin DLV	DLV@swcscouts.org.uk
Guidance on reviewing an activity notification	Dan Baldwin DLV	DLV@swcscouts.org.uk
Safety-related queries	John Bennett MBE District Safety Lead	John.Bennett@swcscouts.org.uk
IT queries with your swcscouts.org.uk account	Chris Wood District IT Team Member	Chris.Wood@swcscouts.org.uk

Link to Teams online: https://teams.microsoft.com

Link to Outlook online: https://outlook.office.com/mail/

APPENDIX ONE: USER GUIDE – ACTIVITY APPROVAL FORM

Volunteers working with Groups and Sections around South West Cheshire should complete the activity approval

Initial data capture about the activity leader (leader in charge) and the Group/ESU/Section(s) taking part [fig. A]:

South West Cheshire Activity Approval Form

For use for all Group or Section activities from 01/01/2026

When you submit this form, it will not automatically collect your details like name and email address unless you provide it yourself.

* Required

Activity Leader's Details

Your name *

Enter your answer

Your email address *

Please enter an email

Your phone number (to be used in case of any query) *

The value must be a number

Date of activity *

Please input date (dd/MM/yyyy)

Your Group or ESU *

Select your answer

Section(s) taking part *

☐ Squirrels

☐ Beavers

☐ Cubs

☐ Scouts

☐ Explorers

☐ Network

The answer provided to this question then dictates the questions that follow [fig. B]:

Which of these best describes your activity? *
If unsure, please contact your Group Lead Volunteer or DLV@swcscouts.org.uk for guidance

○ Scout-led activity not requiring Adventurous Activity Permits

○ Scout-led activity run under the Adventurous Activity Permit Scheme

○ Externally-led Activity

Question flow and declaration for Scout-led activity not requiring Adventurous Activity Permits (this option will probably cover most out of HQ activities) [fig. C]:

South West Cheshire Activity Approval Form

* Required

Activity Details

For Scout-led activities not requiring an Adventurous Activity Permit

Location of your activity *

○ Milldale Campsite

○ [Other]

Description of your activity *

[Enter your answer]

Would you like to provide copies of your risk assessment(s) with this submission? *
Please note this is entirely optional for this type of activity but if not attached you may be asked to provide copies of your risk assessment(s) as part of the approval process.

○ Yes

○ No

The questions for this option have been kept to a minimum. Risk Assessments may optionally be provided but this isn't mandatory unless specifically requested by the approver. If this question is answered 'Yes' then an upload link will be shown:

Please click the link below and upload your risk assessments to the folder, then check the box when done. *
https://southwestcheshire-my.sharepoint.com/:f:/g/personal/dan_baldwin_swcscouts_org_uk/EijCKWfRhsRAsI5UgpC-y98BU10VLHtr9HS6jbMf99Ri8A?e=gI8RmP

○ I have uploaded the risk assessment(s)

Risk Assessments may then be uploaded using the link (see figure N below). Once this step is completed, close the upload window in your browser and check the 'I have uploaded the risk assessments' box on the form. You can then complete the declaration to submit the form:

Declaration (activities not requiring permits) *
I confirm that:

- I have consulted POR to check for any specific requirements relating to this activity.
- Written Risk Assessment(s) are in place for this activity, and will be shared in advance of the event with all adult volunteers attending the activity.
- I understand that I may be asked to provide this as part of the approval process, and will be required to share this in the event of any near miss or reportable incident occurring during the event.

Please select 2 options.

☐ Written risk assessment(s) are in place for this non-permit activity

☐ I will share all risk assessments with the other adult volunteers attending

You can print a copy of your answer after you submit

Back **Submit**

Question flow for Scout-led activity run under the Adventurous Activity Permit Scheme [fig. D]:

South West Cheshire Activity Approval Form

* Required

Activity Details

For Scout-led Activities being run under the Adventurous Activity Permit Scheme

Select type of permit scheme activity *

◯ Climbing/abseiling (including crate stacking or tree climbing)

◯ Land-based activities (other than climbing/abseiling or target sports)

◯ Target sports (archery, rifle or pistol shooting, crossbows)

◯ Water activities

Back **Next**

Initial categorisation question for Climbing/abseiling (including crate stacking or tree climbing) [fig. E]:

South West Cheshire Activity Approval Form

* Required

Climbing & Abseiling Activities

Climbing/abseiling activity type *

- ⦿ Climbing, abseiling, tree climbing or crate stacking at Milldale Campsite; instructors arranged via Milldale Team
- ◯ Climbing, abseiling, tree climbing or crate stacking at Milldale Campsite; instructors not arranged by Milldale Team
- ◯ Climbing activity in another location
- ◯ Climbing activity provided by external supplier (e.g. Audley Climbing Centre, Kilnworx etc.)

[Back] [Next]

If the first option is selected, no further data is captured and the form goes directly to the Declaration (see figure P below). Other options open further questions about the activity location, the permit holder (figure M) or external supplier details (figure O) as appropriate and request Risk Assessment uploads (figure N).

Initial location and categorisation question for Land-based activities [fig. F]:

South West Cheshire Activity Approval Form

* Required

Land-based Activities

Location of the activity *

[Enter your answer]

Land-based activity permit type *

- ◯ Caving
- ◯ High ropes
- ◯ Hillwalking (Terrain 1)
- ◯ Hillwalking (Terrain 2)
- ◯ Hovercrafting (on land)
- ◯ Ice climbing
- ◯ Kite surfing
- ◯ Off-road cycling (Environment 1)
- ◯ Off-road cycling (Environment 2)
- ◯ Skiing/snowboarding
- ◯ Other

For those activities that can be provided via the SWC Adventurous Activities sub-team(s), additional question is asked. If 'yes' then the permit holder information and Risk Assessment upload can be skipped and the form goes directly to the Declaration (see figure P below) [fig. G].

Has this activity been arranged via the South West Cheshire Activities Team? *

○ Yes

○ No

Back   Next

For all other activities, this opens up further question flow about the permit holder (figure M) or external supplier details (figure O) and then request Risk Assessment uploads (figure N).

Initial categorisation question for target sports [fig. H]:

South West Cheshire Activity Approval Form

* Required

Target Sports Activities

Target sports activity *

○ Archery, crossbows or air rifle/pistol shooting at Milldale Campsite; instructors arranged via Milldale Team

○ Archery, crossbows or air rifle/pistol shooting at Milldale Campsite; instructors arranged via SWC Target Sports Team

○ Shooting at 17th SWC HQ; instructed by Andrew Whalley

○ Any other target sports activity

For the first 3 options, the permit holder information and Risk Assessment upload can be skipped and the form goes directly to the Declaration (see figure P below). The fourth option opens up further question flow about the activity location, the permit holder (figure M) or external supplier details (figure O) and then request Risk Assessment uploads (figure N).

Initial location [fig. J] and categorisation question for water activities [fig. K]:

South West Cheshire Activity Approval Form

* Required

Water Activities

Location of water activity *

Enter your answer

[fig. K]

Water activity permit type *

○ Bell boating

○ Canoeing

○ Dinghy sailing

○ Dragon boating

○ Hovercrafting (on water)

○ Kayaking (river)

○ Kayaking (sea)

○ Keelboating

○ Motor cruising

○ Narrow boating

○ Personal watercraft (jet ski)

○ Powerboating

○ Pulling

○ Rafting

○ Snorkelling

○ Stand up paddleboarding

○ Water skiing

○ White water rafting

○ Wind surfing

○ Yachting

For those activities that can be provided via the SWC Adventurous Activities sub-team(s), additional question is asked. If 'yes' then the permit holder information and Risk Assessment upload can be skipped and the form goes directly to the Declaration (see figure P below) [fig. L].

Has this activity been arranged via the South West Cheshire Activities Team? *

○ Yes

○ No

Back   Next

For all other activities, this opens up further question flow about the permit holder (figure M) or external supplier details (figure O) and then request Risk Assessment uploads (figure N).

Permit Holder & Risk Assessment section [fig. M]:

Answering first question 'I am using an external activity supplier' redirects into the external supplier details (figure O).

Uploading Risk Assessments [fig. N]:

Risk Assessments must be uploaded using the link. Clicking the link opens the following upload page [fig. N]. Any file types may be uploaded here, and there is no limit on the number of files that can be uploaded.
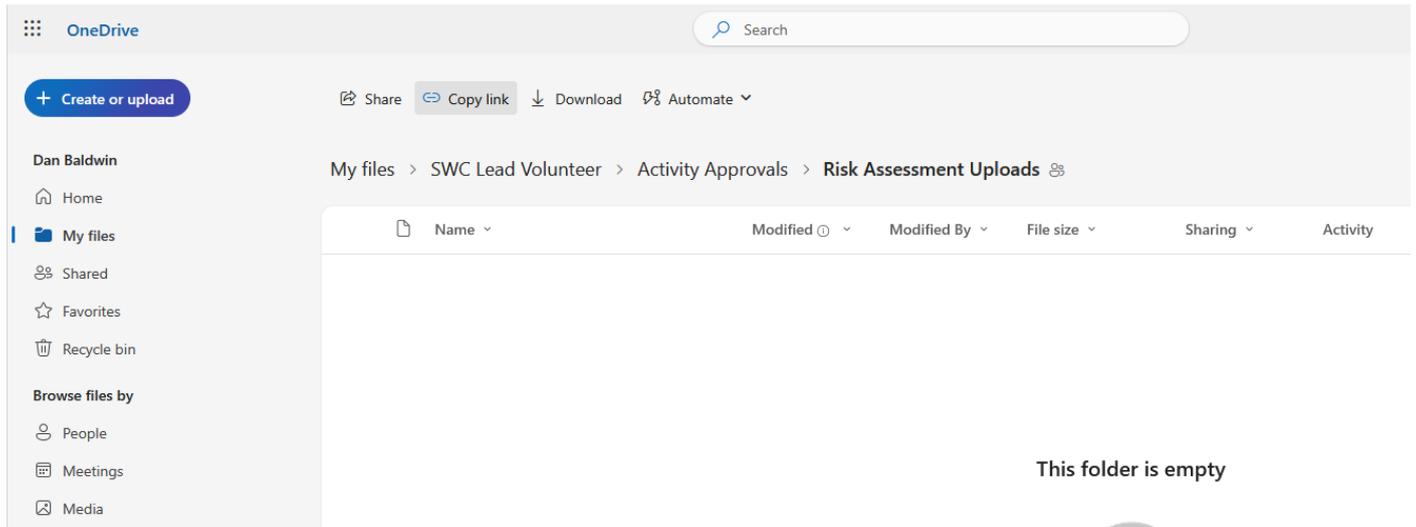
Files can be uploaded either by:

- 'Drag and drop' into the folder; or
- Click 'Create or upload' button, choose 'Files upload' and select your files.
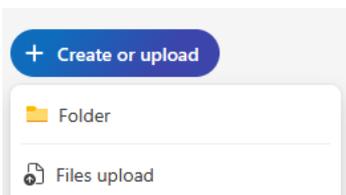
Then close the upload window in your browser, check the 'I have uploaded the risk assessments' box on the form and click next to go to the Declaration (figure P).

Question flow for 'externally-led' activities [fig. O]:

South West Cheshire Activity Approval Form

* Required

Activity Details
For externally-led activities

Name of external person/company providing the activity

Enter your answer

Description of externally-led activity *

Enter your answer

Location of externally-led activity

Enter your answer

Please click the link below and upload your risk assessments to the folder, then check the box when done. You should upload the external activity supplier's risk assessment for this activity session, and any 'wraparound' risk assessments for elements of the activity that you remain responsible for. *

https://southwestcheshire-my.sharepoint.com/:f:/g/personal/dan_baldwin_swcscouts_org_uk/EijCKWfRhsRAsI5UgpC-y98BU10VLHtr9HS6jbMf99Ri8A?e=gl8RmP

☐ I have uploaded the risk assessments

Has the activity provider asked you to complete/sign a liability waiver? *
If yes, please ensure a copy of the waiver has been provided to Unity.

◯ Yes

◯ No

Risk Assessments must be uploaded using the link (see figure N). Once uploaded, check the 'I have uploaded the risk assessments' box on the form and click next to go to the Declaration (figure P).

Declaration [fig. P]

This is the final step of the process. The declaration must be read, and the two boxes checked before the form can be submitted:
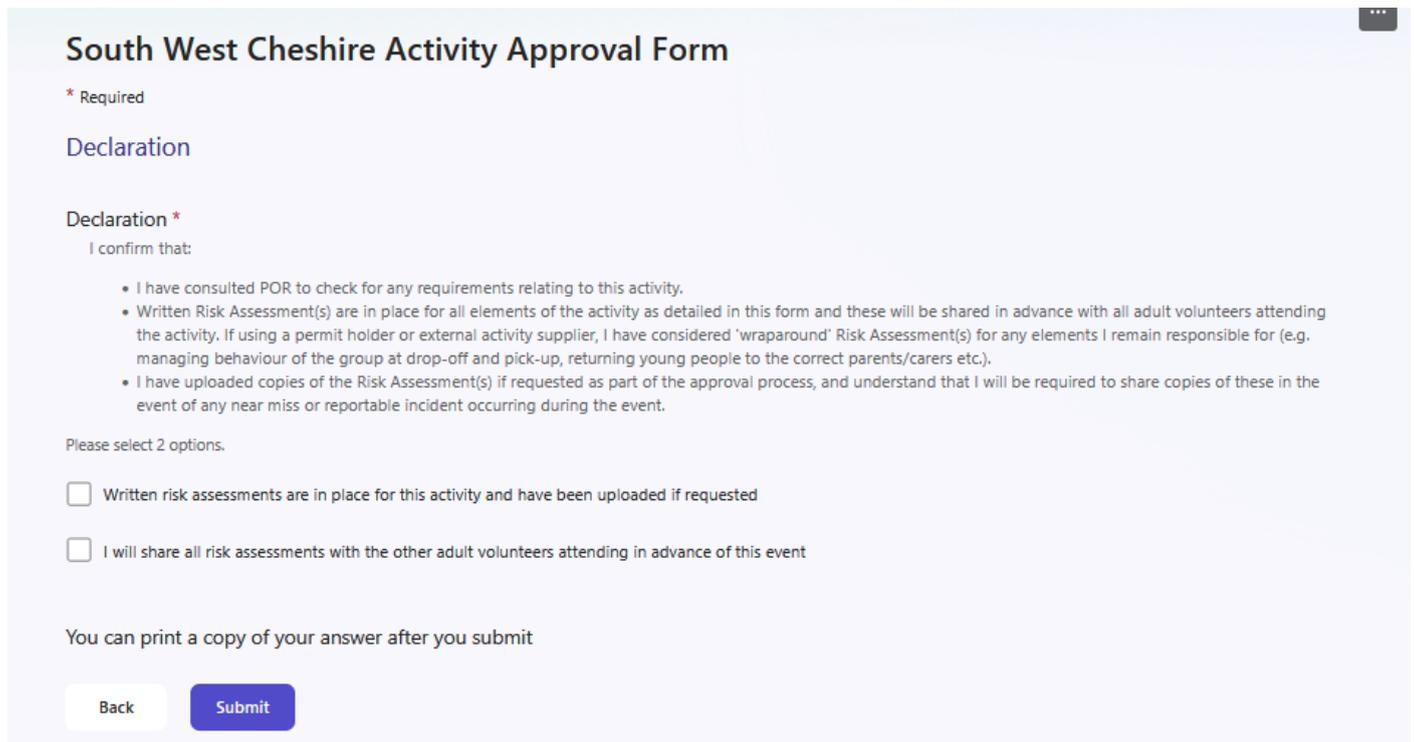
South West Cheshire Activity Approval Form

* Required

Declaration

Declaration *

I confirm that:

- I have consulted POR to check for any requirements relating to this activity.
- Written Risk Assessment(s) are in place for all elements of the activity as detailed in this form and these will be shared in advance with all adult volunteers attending the activity. If using a permit holder or external activity supplier, I have considered 'wraparound' Risk Assessment(s) for any elements I remain responsible for (e.g. managing behaviour of the group at drop-off and pick-up, returning young people to the correct parents/carers etc.).
- I have uploaded copies of the Risk Assessment(s) if requested as part of the approval process, and understand that I will be required to share copies of these in the event of any near miss or reportable incident occurring during the event.

Please select 2 options.

☐ Written risk assessments are in place for this activity and have been uploaded if requested

☐ I will share all risk assessments with the other adult volunteers attending in advance of this event

You can print a copy of your answer after you submit

[Back] [**Submit**]

APPENDIX TWO: SAMPLE E-MAILS

Submission confirmation email – activity forwarded for GLV approval. This is sent to the email address provided in the form after the form is submitted, with a cc to the GLV to whom the approval is assigned and the submission details attached.

Submission confirmation email – activity requiring DLV approval. This is sent to the email address provided in the form after the form is submitted, with a cc to the DLV and the submission details attached.

Approval confirmation email. This is sent to the email address provided in the form if the activity is approved, with a cc to the approver and attaching the submission details.

Your activity request has been approved

SA SWC Activity Notifications <activitynotifications@
To ○ dan@danbaldwin.co.uk
Cc ● Dan Baldwin

Reply | Reply All | Forward | ...
Mon 24/11/2025 23:05

📄 PDF 67_11_24_2025 11_01_48 PM_Dan Baldwin_3rd SWC (Wolverton).pdf ⌄
109 KB

Dear Dan Baldwin,

Dan Baldwin has now **approved** your proposed activity on 2025-11-28.

You are now free to proceed with this activity. I hope it goes well!

Approval Details

Approved by: Dan Baldwin (Dan.Baldwin@swcscouts.org.uk)
Approved on: 2025-11-24T23:04:28Z
Approvers comments: Happy to approve this one

A copy of the detail from your activity notification is attached to this email for your records.

Regards,

Dan

Dan Baldwin
District Lead Volunteer
South West Cheshire Scouts

Rejection confirmation email. This is sent to the email address provided in the form if the activity is rejected, with a cc to the person who rejected the application and attaching the submission details.

Your activity request has been rejected

SA SWC Activity Notifications <activitynotifications@
To ○ dan@danbaldwin.co.uk
Cc ● Dan Baldwin

Reply | Reply All | Forward | ...
Mon 24/11/2025 23:12

📄 PDF 68_11_24_2025 11_09_58 PM_Dan Baldwin_25th SWC (Bunbury & District).pdf ⌄
109 KB

Dear Dan Baldwin,

Dan Baldwin has unfortunately **rejected** your proposed activity on 2025-11-29.

This activity must not go ahead.

Rejection Details

Rejected by: Dan Baldwin (Dan.Baldwin@swcscouts.org.uk)
Rejected on: 2025-11-24T23:12:02Z
Comments:

For further information concerning the reasons for rejection, please contact the above, or reply to this email using 'Reply All'.

A copy of the detail from your original submission is attached to this email for your records.

Regards,

Dan

Dan Baldwin
District Lead Volunteer
South West Cheshire Scouts
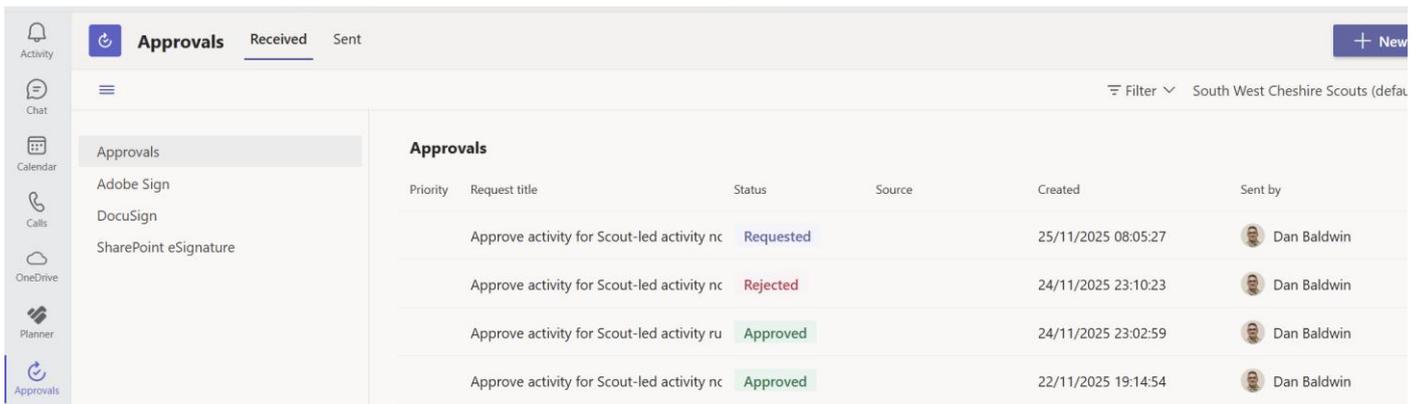
APPENDIX THREE: GUIDE FOR APPROVERS

When you are assigned an approval, you'll receive notification in two ways:

1. A Teams notification (you'll need to be logged into Teams with your 'swcscouts.org.uk' account to receive this

2. An email notification (this can only be sent to a 'swcscouts.org.uk' email address)

In Teams, this will appear in your notifications:
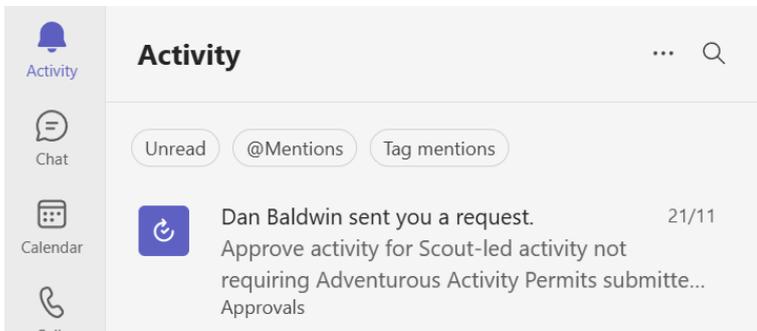
And also in the 'Approvals' app in the left hand menu, which also shows all your current and past approval requests.

Opening up the notification or clicking on the approval will display this window:

From here, your options are:

1. Click the link under 'Attachments' to open a folder in Sharepoint containing a copy of the activity form submission data (PDF) and any risk assessments uploaded as part of the submission (see example below).

2. Approve the activity by clicking the 'Approve' button. Any comments added in the 'Comments' box will be included in the approval email back to the form submitter.

3. Reject the activity by clicking the 'Reject' button. Any comments added in the 'Comments' box will be included in the rejection email back to the form submitter.

4. If there is a reason why you don't feel you can or should review this activity (for example because you're also the leader in charge of it) you can reassign the approval to another approver via the 'More actions' dropdown:
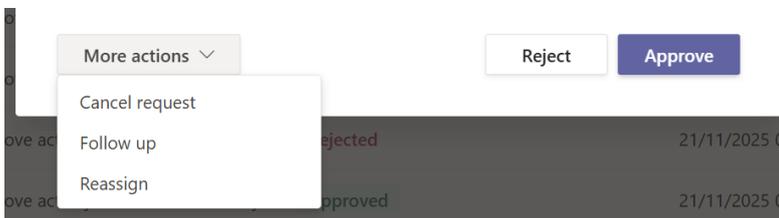
Clicking 'Reassign' option opens up the following window, and you can then reassign the approval to any user with an swcscouts.org.uk email account by entering their name in the 'Reassign to' box and clicking 'Confirm'.
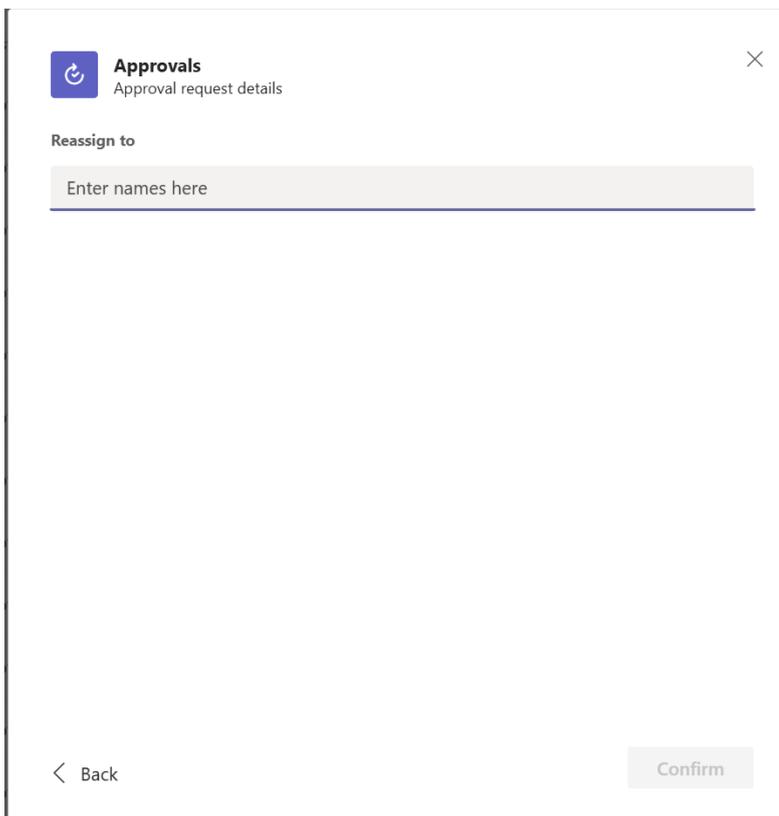
You can also view the details and approve or reject the activity directly from the Teams chat (in the 'Workflows' channel)

As well as from the automated email notification you'll receive:

Clicking 'Approve' or 'Reject' from either of these places will open up a Comments box in case you want to add some comments to be passed back to the activity submitter.

Once you have approved or rejected the activity, you'll receive a further notification confirming this:
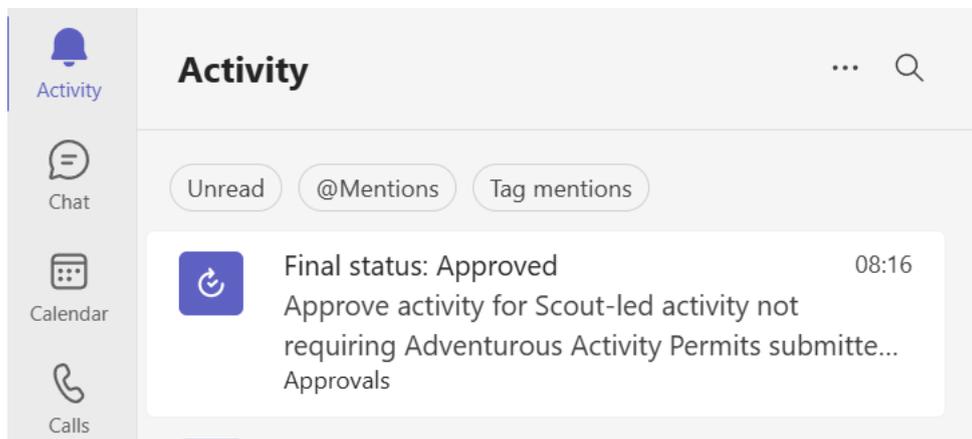
And the activity status will update in the 'Approvals' app to reflect the new status:
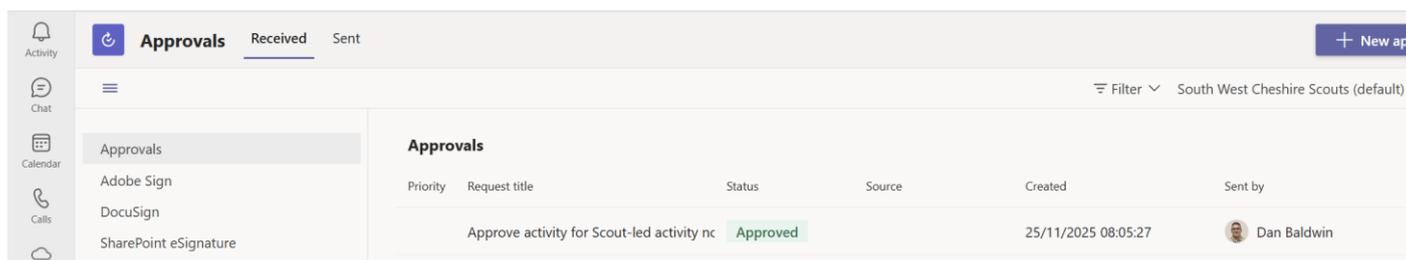
And the email notification also updates to show the approval has been actioned:

You can still access the link to the folder containing the form submission data and risk assessments, if you want to refer back to it later by clicking on the relevant notification or item from the 'Approvals' list.

APPENDIX FOUR: QUICK REFERENCE GUIDE

When must I submit an activity approval form?
- For any activity planned away from your Section's usual meeting place
- For any activity requiring an Adventurous Activity Permit
- For any activity run by an external provider

Not needed for:
- Nights away activities (submit NANs separately via MyMembership)
- Activities held within the boundary of your Section's regular meeting place

Who approves what?
- GLVs: all Squirrel, Beaver, Cub or Scout section activities
- 14-24 Team Leader: all Explorer or Scout Network activities
- DLV or Programme Team Leader: all Permit Scheme and Externally-led activities

If approver has a conflict of interest:
- GLVs own approvals will automatically be directed to DLV
- Any approver may reassign an approval to another member of the District Leadership Team

Things you need before submitting:
- Basic activity details (dates, location, section(s) attending)
- Copies of written risk assessment(s) – mandatory to include these for Permit Scheme or Externally-led activities
- Permit holder or external supplier information where relevant

How to submit:
- Open the South West Cheshire Activity Approval Form – Fill in form
- Enter leader, section and activity details
- Upload Risk Assessments if required
- Tick declarations
- Submit (aim for *at least* 7 days before your activity date)

What happens next?
- Data stored securely in a dedicated Sharepoint site
- Details routed to correct approver
- Approver may approve, reassign, request more info or reject
- Email confirmation sent

Approver quick actions:
- View submission details and RA(s)
- Approve or reject (via email or Teams)
- Reassign if needed (via Teams)
- **No backdated approvals: form will automatically reject**
- **Safety first: stop any potentially unsafe activity**

Support contacts:
- Process queries: DLV@swcscouts.org.uk
- Safety matters: John.Bennett@swcscouts.org.uk
- IT support: Chris.Wood@swcscouts.org.uk