



DC's mid - year update for the Mayor as  
President of Winchester Scouts,  
13.30 - 14.00, Wednesday 27<sup>th</sup> July 2016



1. **The 2011 'Meeting the Demand' strategy continues to bear fruit.** Over the past 5 years:
  - The number of Beaver Colonies has risen from 7 to 18
  - The number of young people has increased by 54% to 1,086
  - The number of adult leaders has grown 119% to 228.
  
2. **More growth in the pipeline.** 2015 was strong with 15% youth growth – the second highest growth rate across the UK of the 119 Scout Districts with over 1,000 young people. (There are 697 Districts in total.) 2016 will be at least as strong. Over 200 additional places are being created on the back of:
  - At least 7 new sections (grant forms out last week for September starts)
  - One new Scout Group – the 16<sup>th</sup> Winchester (Littleton & Sparsholt) opening in the Autumn
  - Continuing 'waiting list' demand for Scout places across the Winchester area – girls and boys.
  
3. **So why is the demand for, and supply of Scouting in Winchester so strong?** How can it be that 240 or 27% of the youngest 6-7 year old cohort will soon be in Scouts? Three factors explain this:
  - **Winchester parents attach high importance to non-formal education** and character development. Scouting across Winchester represents the highest quality, most affordable and a community based option for adventurous activities with planned progression aged 6-18.
  - **Attractive high adventure, community & international activities** for young people include: camping, climbing, hill walking, water activities like tall ship sailing: & in the past 12 months, expeditions & community work in all of Gambia, Uganda, Tanzania, Iceland, Japan & Switzerland.
  - **Sound and sustained 100% volunteer leadership** and governance at the City's 10 Scout Groups.
  
4. **The critical part played by Winchester City Council** in all this – past, present and future.
  - **Past.** Some 50 years ago WCC long-leased 5 sites to Winchester Scouts for small Scout buildings.
  - **Present.** Only two of these sites are fit for purpose, long-term. Three need exchanging. A further 6 sites are needed (2 for Barton Farm) including some one hectare sites for 360 strong super Groups.
  - **Future.** Action is needed quickly, if at least 2,000 parents are not to be disappointed. In some Wards the lack of available long-term facilities will soon 'choke off' any future growth. Many long leases are needed on additional sites to allow existing & new Groups to add more sections of 24-30.
  
5. **Why have Scouts made little progress on the land & building front** since the formal 2013 approach to WCC? What should Scouts do differently? Higher profile? Why, where & how? Three factors are:
  - **People changes** in Councillors, Leaders and Officers etc.
  - **The opportunistic approach** preferred by WCC involves housing and conflicts of interest e.g. Abbotts Barton and Barton Farm. A targeted & public approach by Ward and need might be better.
  - **Scouts have been slow and weak in mass communicating** all of: local youth & parent demand for non-formal education and character development; the now chronic need for suitable and large sites for new modern Scout buildings; & the opportunities for the provision of much sought community use of buildings by day – especially for the very young and elderly. As common challenges these issues may attract HCC and Westminster audiences for top-down encouragement and action / policy changes given recent DfE pilots with Scouts on non-formal education and character development.