

NEWS RELEASE



October 22, 2012

Winchester scouts celebrate ...

Over 800 Beavers, Cubs, Scouts and Explorer Scouts, their 1,600 parents and 400 leaders and helpers across Winchester are celebrating after plans were approved last week for a replacement building at their Pinsent district campsite.

A major fund-raising effort to raise the additional £400,000 needed to develop the site is now underway.

Enjoyed by generations of young people aged 6-18, [Pinsent Camp](#) lies at the heart of scouting in Winchester. The 2.5-hectare site two miles west of Winchester is made up of woodland interspersed with open spaces used for outdoor scout meetings, camping, campfires, activities and games. It is owned by [Winchester District](#) Scouts and serves the city's eight scout groups, each with its own Beaver, Cub, Scout and Explorer sections for different ages.

The improvements focus on the entrance to the campsite, where there is currently a section of gravel hard standing and open grassland with four buildings: a storage container, portakabin, toilet block, and metal shed.

Under the approved plans, the existing structures will be demolished and replaced with a new energy-efficient amenity block – designed in keeping with the surrounding rural area, and built from sustainable, recycled and locally-sourced materials.

The new building will house under one roof all the facilities provided by the previous ones – including toilets, showers, washing-up area, a multi-use room and storage – but at a size and standard better suited to the needs and numbers of boys and girls using the campsite, including wheelchair users. The block will also provide accommodation for Beavers and Cub use in adverse conditions, compliant with Scout Association guidelines.

Winchester District Scouts Chairman, Richard Mendelsohn and District Commissioner, Stephen Parker commented: "Scouting exists to provide fun and adventure for young people, helping them to grow in confidence and challenging them to reach their potential. Camping and the related activities provided at Pinsent form one of the biggest planks in a balanced programme based around adventure. The improvements to Pinsent will greatly enhance our ability to provide Scouting and all its adventurous activities for future generations of young people in Winchester.

"We are thrilled that our application for the new building at Pinsent Campsite has met with full approval. Many years' hard work from a range of people – volunteers, officials, and professionals – went into the proposals, and we owe a debt of thanks to all of these. Our next challenge is to raise the £450,000 funding required to develop the site. We already have £50,000. Just 400,000 more to find!"

The philosophy behind the site proposals is to improve provision at Pinsent while preserving the intrinsic qualities and character of a special place loved and used by many.

Pinsent has a scouting history dating back more than 80 years. The site has been used by Winchester District since 1931, when it was shared with a scout troop from nearby [Winchester College](#).

The existing site has changed very little in more than 80 years. Remembering those camps at Pinsent in the early 1930s, Alan Rannie, wrote in his 1963 memoir '*The Story of Scouting in Winchester*': "I have vivid memories of those early summer camps. The six acres of broken woodland, with their narrow, winding paths and scattered tents seemed like the part of a town in fairyland. I remember particularly the nightingales, which were not at all shy, and often filled the intervals at campfires. They would sing all night."

There may be fewer nightingales in 2012, but Pinsent Camp remains an idyllic spot for Winchester's young people to enjoy and to pursue adventurous activities.

- **If you ever camped at Pinsent; want to find out more about the development plans; or offer fund-raising support, please contact [Richard Mendelsohn, District Chairman at richardmendelsohn@btinternet.com](#) and 01962 855068 or [Stephen Parker, District Commissioner at stephenjamesparker@gmail.com](#) and 07710-325869.**

PICTURE CAPTION: xxx.

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For all media enquiries, please contact:

Carrie Lowe

Mobile: 07956 408 121

carrie.lowe@remarkablegroup.co.uk

Notes to editors

The scouting body [Winchester District](#) is one of the largest voluntary and biggest youth organisations in Winchester.

The District dates back to 1907 when it quickly became one of the fastest growing and largest Scout Districts in the country. Today it comprises Winchester City's 800+ individual Beavers, Cubs, Scouts and Explorers - both boys and girls - across 34 sections within eight Scout Groups. Each scout group serves a different geographical area within and around Winchester. There are more than 120 uniformed leaders, and hundreds of CRB-checked helpers offering additional support. The District is one of the most successful in Hampshire. It also has one of the largest waiting lists. Sadly, there are almost 200 boys and girls of Scouting age, for whom there are not enough places.

Used for outdoor meetings and camping events, [Pinsent Campsite](#) is central to what Winchester Scouts provides for young people.