



Winchester

<http://www.winscouts.org.uk/>



NEWS RELEASE

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70% Surge in Demand for Scout Places

Record numbers of young people want to join Winchester Scouts for its fun and adventure. Right now, there are 260 young people of Scout age, registered and wanting to join Scout Groups in Winchester, for whom there are no places. This is despite increasing the number of places by 40% to 950 over the last 4 years.

The recent 2015 Scout Census shows Winchester's waiting list up from 150 to 260 over the past year. This is the largest Scout waiting list across all 27 Scout Districts in Hampshire.

Most of the demand (65% or 170) is for 6-8 year old girls and boys wanting to join Beaver Scouts. A further 70 (or 30%) of youngsters are aged 8-10 and want to join Cub Scouts.

The shortage of spaces is spread across Winchester City and the surrounding areas. The hot spots are South Wonston to the north; Littelton, Harestock and Sparsholt; the city wards of St Bartholomew, St Pauls, St Luke and St Michael; and Colden Common to the south.

The only solution is to open more Beaver Colonies and Cub Packs at both existing and at new Scout Groups. Winchester already has a 10 year Development Plan to double in size to 2,000 based on its recent expansion from 7 to 16 Beaver Colonies and from 8 to 10 Scout Groups. But this is not enough to *Meet the Demand* when 30-40% of young people want to be Scouts.

Stephen Parker, the District Commissioner said: "Baden Powell believed that *The Spirit of Scouting* was about doing the right thing at all costs. The right thing now is to step forward, to make a difference, and to help us *Meet the Demand* from young people. We need three things:

- We need more 'adventure minded' adults and *wannabe* Beaver parents to become flexible volunteers so that we can start more Beaver Colonies for 6 year olds
- We need Councillors and Council Officers to help us swap existing Council sites long-leased from 50 years ago for new sites for larger Scout Group buildings. These new Scout buildings could include community use when not used by Scouts
- And we need people to be kind and to give something back by way of *JustGiving* donations to help with our replacement building projects like Pinsent Campsite <https://www.justgiving.com/winchesterdistrictscouts/>

If we do these three things in Winchester, we can make Scouting better and provide many more places for more young people. This is all about doing the right thing."

Stephen Parker, District Commissioner, Winchester Scouts stephenjamesparker@gmail.com

Richard Mendelsohn, District Chairman, Winchester Scouts richardmendelsohn@btinternet.com

Ends - see also Notes for Editors ...

Notes for Editors:

Winchester District Scouts exist to provide adventurous activities and personal development opportunities for young people aged 6-25. Scouting promotes the physical, intellectual, social and spiritual wellbeing of the individual, helping them achieve their full potential. The Scouting ethos is that young people develop most when they are 'learning by doing', when they are given responsibility, work in teams, take acceptable risks and think for themselves.

Winchester District Scouts, comprises 10 Scout Groups across Winchester City (for 6-13 year olds), 4 Explorer Scout Units (for 14-17 year olds) and one Network for 18-25 year olds). There are currently over 950 young people in Winchester Scouts. In addition there are 250 scout leaders and assistants, and over 300 CRB'd adult helpers in Winchester.

Each Scout Group is made up of sections for boys and girls. The Beaver Scout Colony is for 6-8 year olds; the Cub Scout Pack for 8-10½ year olds; and the Scout Troop for 10½-13 year olds. Some Groups also host Explorer Scout Units for 14-17 year olds that are provided by District as is Network for 18-25 year olds.

Every Scout Group is a charity with trustees in its own right. As such it is governed by Charity Commission Laws and by the Policy and Rules of the Scout Association at Gilwell Park - the UK's largest voluntary youth organisation. Each Scout Group depends on two sets of adult support - an adult uniform side responsible for delivering scouting to young people; and a non-uniform or Executive side that oversees the functioning and the infrastructure of the Group.

Winchester Scouts is one of 27 Scout Districts that comprise Hampshire County Scouts. The President of Winchester District Scouts is The Mayor, Her Worship, Councillor Eileen Berry. Hampshire is the largest Scout county in the UK with over 17,500 young people.